

SCULPTURE
THROUGH THE AGES

SCULPTURE THROUGH THE AGES

by Lincoln Rothschild

FOREWORD BY

PAUL MANSHIP

NEW YORK

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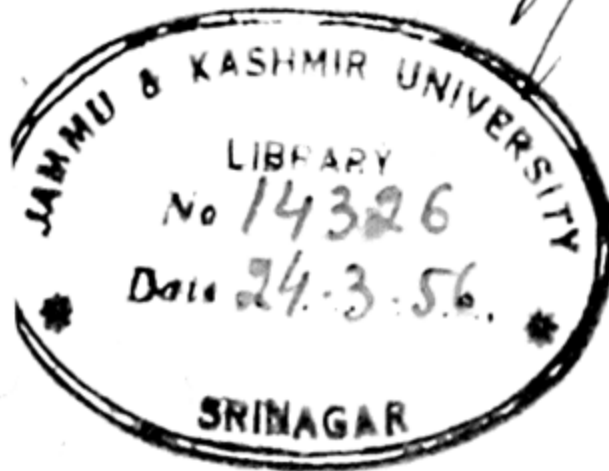
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FOREWORD

ALL THE world loves beauty, and universal is the sensuous pleasure of looking at masterpieces of art. The outstanding works of sculpture preserved from antiquity are known to many of us and art through the ages has been widely published, but new methods of reproduction on the printed page and finer, more revealing photographs, combined with new comparisons and combinations give vivacity and fresh interest to the book.

In ancient Greece, through the Middle Ages and the Gothic period, sculpture was generally made for some useful purpose and was an expression of the common cultural aim of the people and part of the popular life. Only since the Renaissance times have we had "art for art's sake" in the sense that a carving has been made without practical application or ordered for no specific place or purpose. Nowadays the sculptor painfully misses the feeling that his work is widely needed. His creative impulse and personal preference may carry him along one of many paths. Tradition is not essential and he may express his feeling for form in terms of abstraction or its opposite, naturalism, or he may reflect the influence of his favorite school of art, be it Greek, Chinese, or African. In these divergent tendencies and directions is expressed the chaos of our times, and so the artist survives as a personality in a time when the standardization and regimentation of the machine age push him from the common currents of life.

The artist may not entirely ignore the artistic creations of the past. Art may not be learned simply by studying nature. At bottom the techniques of sculpture are a lot of recipes, which may best be studied in the museums. But a practical application of art provides control and meaning of its techniques. Therefore the approach of this book, which endeavors to make clear the original meaning, function, or social expression of the great works of the past, should be particularly helpful to a new understanding of sculpture.

Of course, each connoisseur of sculpture in gathering together a collection of works would choose differently, and it is the personal and unusual selection of this sort that gives new meaning to familiar pieces by placing them in new contexts. That is one of the wonderful things about great art, its endless fund of new meanings.

Until people understand the importance and need of artistic expression, artists will have a difficult time creating a great tradition for America, which has shown itself in many ways to be capable of creating important cultural expression. They must be free to put all that is necessary into their work without consideration of cost, as they did in the great periods when art was supported by or for the community as a whole. Now when a sculptor must depend largely on individual patrons, considerations of cost and the constant search for patronage make his effort difficult. Recent programs of community support for art to correct this situation hold great promise for the future of American culture. Money should not be the lord of culture to the extent that it is today. Until a worthier orientation can be developed, the growth of art in America will be hampered. In the search for higher values we may well survey the great art of the past, attentive to all aspects of its creation as in the following pages.

PAUL MANSHIP.

NEW YORK.

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INTRODUCTION

GUIDES in Rome, little moustachioed men who wore their derby hats and high wing collars all summer, and always mentioned the cash value of every building or work of art, used to pause before Michelangelo's great statue of Moses and point to a blemish on its knee. The story they told was that when the work was completed, the master thought it so life-like it needed only to speak to be completely human. He commanded it to do so, and flew into a rage hurling his heavy mallet which did the damage when there was no response. If this very doubtful tale is true, Michelangelo did his own creation a deep injustice, for like all serious and intense productions of the human personality it speaks, not with the sound of words to be sure, but in a manner comprehensible in all times and places.

The language of art varies according to its medium. Painting speaks almost as the written word, saying much but clinging to a plane from which it must be read. Music soars disembodied, and entrances with an immediate and direct message that is only for the spirit. But sculpture stands forth and speaks as the presence of the man himself. For sculpture is an art of mass and space. The column of form rises, as the man steps up to hold the attention of his people; and it moves in the space about itself expressively, as the man gestures in his speech. Easy and calm it may be, flowing with even stress and rhythm in its own immediate compass; or exuberant, excited, frantic, radiating in complex and dynamic gesticulation. It may be motionless, drawn up with architectural dignity and tension or relaxed in eternal resignation.

Too little has been written, however, of what the language of art actually reveals. Its record should constantly be scanned, for human culture grows only by cumulative application of human experience. All the mistakes have been made, there is no need to keep on making them. The antidote lies in keeping alive a sensitive contact with cultural patterns of the past. The following pages are prepared as a lesson in how to read the exciting and illuminating text of western sculpture. The dominant perspectives of each period and the immediate background of each work will be presented to provide as precise an indication as possible of just what human occasion called for the particular work or just what human expression it conveys. Criticism and teaching of the art of the past have been seriously inadequate in this respect.

One group has rejected completely any concern with historical circumstances as irrelevant to the timeless meaning of pure esthetic form, which may be timeless but what meaning can it have in a vacuum? Another, mostly in the universities and some museums, has made the correlation in a superficial, unenlightening fashion. Scientific archaeology is the one substantial spot in the understanding of art to date, but it is of no use whatever to the general public and tends to neglect the human or cultural background of art in its concern with which stone was laid upon which and precisely when. The intention here is to discuss no fact without a human connection of direct potential significance to the culturally concerned reader, to present no work without the facts of its position in the history of human culture.

Aesthetic or compositional analysis of the works has been kept as simple, obvious and untechnical as possible, so as not to exceed the range of general cultural interest. However, simplification has not been carried to the point of obscuring the true magnificence of cultural creation by reducing it to trivial terms, which is the mistake of so many "introductory" works on art. It is the author's hopeful opinion that the relation between style and social expression has been discussed with sufficient significance to be informative in some degree even to the professional world of artists and analysts of art, while remaining understandable to anyone with an active and interested mind and eye. The latter is guaranteed by the author's wife who has no training in art. She has read every word and insisted graciously but firmly on the elimination of those that would give the least pause to anyone not habituated to the terminology and petty vanities of cultural writing.

Understanding of certain formal qualities peculiar to the sculptural medium is necessary, but their analysis must aid and not supplant interpretation of its human meaning. To regard the formal content of a work of art as its final and complete value is simply to make of art a precious concern and to alienate the broad audience of the people as a whole. This in itself is indeed the aim and expression of a particular trend in modern art. Its false and narrow leadership has imposed serious cultural privation on the community as a whole, especially in respect to the plastic arts, and caused the living artist to suffer economically besides.

Obviously the factual material in a work of this scope could not all be traced back to original sources by a single author; and most of the interpretations and opinions, though inspired by many various contacts over a long period of study, have no precisely referable origin, so no footnotes or documentation is included. However, an effort has been made to present as much factual material as possible within the given purpose, all checked with authoritative or reliable sources of some sort. The works and periods selected are intended to present the influences leading up to contemporary western culture, *i.e.*, of Europe and America. Egyptian and African

Negro sculpture are included, though originating outside this area, the former because it is the most extensive and best known of the series of great cultures of remote antiquity on which later civilization was based, such as the Sumerian, Chaldean, Babylonian; Negro sculpture because of its virtual adoption by the twentieth century in the trend toward abstract aestheticism. Regretfully the Far East has had to be omitted to avoid over-extension of scope and because there is no way of treating such a rich and complex field as briefly as would be necessary in the present context without injustice to the material, although it has exercised an undeniable influence on European art from time to time.

Selection of individual works has depended on a variety of factors, especially the quality of photographs available. No photograph can perfectly represent a piece of sculpture, and some sculpture cannot be photographed satisfactorily at all. The tremendous and remarkably complete reference collection of photographs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the generous cooperation of the staff have greatly simplified this aspect of the task, which would otherwise have been virtually impossible at the present time. Limitation of space has required choice between similar monuments to avoid needless repetition. An attempt has been made to include all major tastes, limiting but not completely excluding those which may have less merit or cultural dignity. The general requirement of each work is that it be a fine example of the medium in respect of the taste it represents, clearly conveying the character and purpose of its expression, rather than that it be a "masterpiece" in any timeless sense of the word.

Because of the consecutive character of cultural development, and the common general background of works in a given period, which will be discussed only once for each group in the brief prospectus of the section, there is some interdependence in the descriptions of plates in the order given, although within limits each commentary is complete in itself. Throughout all of them, however, the fact that the objects discussed have the indescribable quality of being the human achievement called sculpture must be recognized as the exceedingly important premise to anything that is said about them, else these few words or any analysis of a work of art must appear inadequate.

LINCOLN ROTHCHILD.

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SCULPTURE
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EGYPT

WHY CHANGE?

WITH an arrogance due to the highly effective but perhaps somewhat negative achievements of modern civilization, such as submarines, dive bombers, and automatic plumbing, the twentieth century by and large looks down its nose at any people who tend to accept the *status quo*. Not “progressive.” Therefore it may be startling but suggestive to discover that a brilliant civilization was developed on the banks of the river Nile over 5000 years ago, which did not change any of its fundamental concepts or practices until it “cracked up” 3000 years later.

Monumental building in Egypt achieved a level in temples, pyramids, and other religious structures, which for sheer extent and bulk has never been surpassed. The crafts of domestic and personal adornment created an environment for the ruling society of a splendor, delicacy, and profusion characteristic of the oriental strain in the Egyptian cultural heritage. Scientific knowledge, in view of the fact that it was developed almost directly from the state of primitive ignorance, was considerable. Political and commercial organization were created effectively to control an area and population of vast extent in terms of the ancient world. In later stages an active foreign trade with the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia was engaged in, as well as occasional military campaigns and imperial control in foreign lands.

What was worked out and established during the first five dynasties, a period of about 500 years or less than a sixth of ancient Egypt’s historical span, was not thereafter changed in any fundamental way. Superficial aspects of clothing and writing were altered at certain periods, and occasional political and military upheavals changed ruling personnel, but that was all. Therefore we do not study Egyptian art as an evolution of style from century to century, school to school, or artist to artist. The style of Egyptian art went on from millenium to millenium with the quality of persistence found throughout Egyptian culture. There were of course ups and downs in the degree of activity in cultural production, and in its level of quality or vitality,

but always the same types of form and expression were used. It was as if, having found something that worked, the Egyptian could see no purpose in searching for another solution to the same problem.

This acceptance of unchanging cultural forms was a direct expression of the static quality of Egyptian society, which may well be traced to what the Egyptian people mainly lived by, the river Nile. Their civilization dates virtually from the time they discovered how to organize agricultural production in relation to the annual rise and fall of its waters. They witnessed the perennial renewal of the fertility of their fields in the deposits of silt left by the spring floods, and they knew that beyond the valley richly nourished by this great natural bounty was limitless and uninhabitable desert. Little wonder the Egyptian felt the broad pattern of his life to be in every way beyond the control of his puny individual power. Each must do his utmost in respect to the great basic facts of life as they are, religion, function in society, the particular overlordship to which fealty happens to be due. Quite naturally these things might be thought to proceed from the same source as the never faltering, life-giving waters of the Nile, and equally unalterable.

Skillfully executed in rich profusion, cultural production in Egypt was nevertheless essentially primitive in form and methods of creation. Tremendous monumental structures were accomplished with methods not changed from prehistoric times, by the use of armies of labor. For example, to move a large piece of stone such as would be required for a colossal monolithic statue, temple column, or obelisk, many men with levers would be lined up on each side. Heaving together, they would raise the block a few inches at a time, and others would quickly throw earth under it. Repeated again and again, this eventually raised the block on a small mound which was sloped in the desired direction. Then it was moved down the slope on rollers and the process repeated until the objective was gained.

Another primitive aspect of Egyptian culture was the religion. Though highly developed in ceremony, scripture, and priestly organization, it was confused and elementary in its description of divine jurisdictions, attributes, and genealogy, among a complex hierarchy of animal-human gods. The greatest concern of Egyptian religion seems to have been preparation for the life after death, or more properly, for continuing life after death of the body. For here the primitive quality of thought appears again. The Egyptian notion of eternal life was virtually no more than an identical continuation of the activities of earthly existence, obtained by preserving in actual or representational form all the material requirements. Food was actually buried in the earliest tombs for the sustenance of the deceased. Later, models of food and pictorial representations of its production were substituted. Mummification was to preserve the body as a residence for the spirit; the pyramids and other mortuary

structures were to preserve the mummy and the materials deposited for other-worldly use.

The primitive aspect of Egyptian sculpture is due largely to the failure to care or to realize that space, though intangible, can be represented. Lacking any concern with space, the Egyptian sculptor in his work in the round concentrates completely on developing its opposite or complementary quality, mass. He has carried this quality so far that he achieves a monumentality by sheer concentration of weight, both actual and apparent, that is not surpassed in any other style.

The impression of power in mass must have been gratifying to the Egyptian in two particular respects. In the first place it expressed to him what was the beauty of stasis and continuity in his social environment. To many this is the antithesis of beauty or interest today, but it must have meant a great deal in an early society that had managed to overcome the necessity of nomadic existence and develop security, comfort, and elegance on the basis of a sound system of agricultural production. Furthermore, since the requirement of material persistence was basic in the religious prescription for life after death, the massiveness of Egyptian tombs implied an assurance of eternal life, which quite naturally influenced sculptural style. Thus the interest of the Egyptians in mass represents their cultural aspiration to dominate time. It may be hard to understand, for it is in direct contrast to our modern interest in movement, which represents a cultural aspiration to dominate space.

PLATE I. Portrait statue of the king, Khaf-ra. Cairo, Museum. Diorite;
Fourth Dynasty, *ca.* 2600 B.C.

Solid appearing as the Great Pyramid Khaf-ra built is his powerful, slightly overlife-size portrait statue, the first great sculpture of Egypt. The sensitive vitality felt in its powerful masses was never surpassed in the country's history, although royal portraiture of this type continued to follow virtually the identical conventions that it established. A few examples of the period immediately previous indicate the brief development of the art of sculpture during the first five dynasties when writing, the calendar, solar and scientific observation, architectural techniques, and the groundwork of all Egypt's considerable knowledge and productive organization were being established. These accomplishments of the period were never changed fundamentally until the whole culture collapsed under the weight of successive Persian, Greek, and Roman conquests 2000 years later.

Many modern artists insist on the necessity of getting completely away from natural appearance in order to achieve the fullest abstract aesthetic values of form, but here, practically every part of the body is reduced to its simplest geometrical terms though the whole remains perfectly recognizable. The thorax is an inverted truncated cone; the upper arms are cylinders swelling slightly at the center; the shoulders, spheres; the legs, columns. At the same time the figure clearly suggests a living form and not a mechanized assemblage of discontinuous parts. Furthermore, the great feeling of static mass thus achieved, clearly conveys the quality of impregnable permanence, which was a basic theme of cultural expression in Egypt.

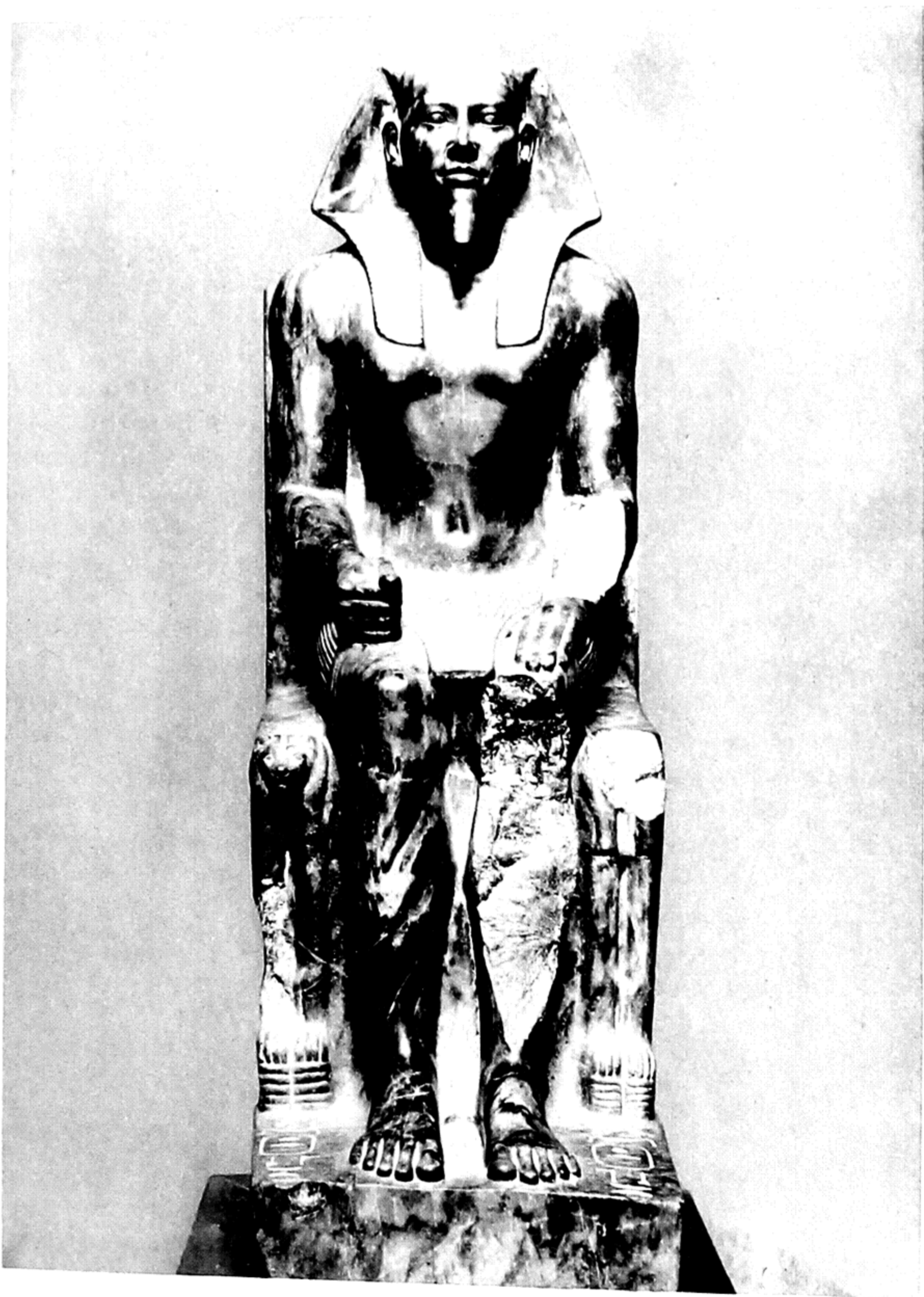


PLATE II. Bust, detail of the portrait statue of the king, Khaf-ra. Cairo, Museum. Diorite; Fourth Dynasty, *ca.* 2600 B.C.

Elegantly stylized is the hawk behind the head of Khaf-ra, symbolizing Horus, god of the sun. His intimately protective attitude indicates the belief of the Egyptians in the deity of the pharaoh and his consequent association with the family of the gods. Each of the Egyptian gods had an animal symbol and, in later periods, they were often represented in combination, having human bodies with the heads of their respective animals. The pattern is sometimes reversed as in the Sphinx, and these combined animal-human deities were common in ancient Eastern religions.

Diorite, the extremely hard black stone of which this figure is carved, had to be fetched a great way, like many other materials used in Egypt. Despite the conservatism and the almost landlocked isolation of their self-sufficient valley, the Egyptians displayed considerable adventurousness in developing their political and commercial fortunes. Not the least item was the lengths to which they went to get materials for sculpture. In the delta, the site of major activity in the Old Kingdom, only clay was obtainable. Stone of many sorts—sandstone, limestone, granite, basalt, and others—was abundant in the cliffs that edged the valley of the Nile farther up, but it had to be floated down the river for use in the completely alluvial regions of Lower Egypt. A tremendous amount of labor was required for transportation in view of the simple devices employed. Wood was also used freely for sculpture and other purposes. That grown in Egypt was much too soft to be of any value in sculpture, however, and considerable quantities had to be imported from Asia Minor. Metals, of which bronze was the most common but not plentiful, iron rare until late, and gold more available than silver, were likewise imported by boat and caravan from other parts of the continent, from the eastern Mediterranean, and from Asia.



PLATE III. (a) Ceremonial statuette of the king, Sesostris I. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Wood; Twelfth Dynasty, *ca.* 1935 B.C.
(b) Portrait statue of an overseer, Ka'aper; called "Sheik-el-Beled." Cairo, Museum. Wood; Fourth Dynasty, *ca.* 2500 B.C.

Strange as it may seem, the emphasis on mass in large Egyptian sculpture is accompanied by a remarkable sharpness and delicacy in the carving of small works. Definition of anatomical detail is kept as shallow as possible in each case to avoid breaking up the mass of the figure. On the small scale of the ceremonial statuette of King Sesostris I, about eighteen inches in height, it becomes almost imperceptibly delicate. His headdress is the flat ceremonial crown which the pharaoh wore as King of Lower Egypt, quite different from the tall one (see Plate VI) worn when he was officiating as King of Upper Egypt. The pharaoh's full title was Ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt, thus perpetuating a circumstance of the original formation of the nation.

The predynastic inhabitants of the Nile Valley were conquered just before the dawn of history by a migrant horde of somewhat superior culture from somewhere in Asia, who settled in the lower portion of the valley, forcing the natives farther up. For a time therefore, there was an actual distinction between Upper and Lower Egypt. Subsequently the superior people of the lower valley conquered their neighbors, uniting and reorganizing the land in the great development which began the culture of Egypt. Formally, however, the distinction was never dropped. A theory has been advanced to the effect that all the great cultures of the world have resulted from some great combination of races such as this, citing the Dorian invasion as preceding classical Greek civilization, and the invasion of Italy by northern "barbarians" before the Renaissance.

No regal conventions were involved in the representation of Ka'aper, an overseer, and so we note a convincing individuality in his portly figure and round, firmly modeled face. The desire to create accurate resemblances in Egyptian sculpture arose from the religious purpose for which the work was intended. In addition to careful preservation of the body, it was necessary to provide an accurate image of a person's physical appearance as an alternative resting place for the soul in the life after death. These "doubles" are known as "ka" statues. To characterize the individual further, he was often shown engaged in his principal occupation, if he had one. Most people lived by the jobs they performed, as in any age, and could not afford the means of permanent burial requiring great labor and costly materials. Hence representations of working folk are generally found in a king's tomb, not their own.



PLATE IV. Detail, head of portrait statue of an overseer, Ka'aper; called "Sheik-el-Beled." Cairo, Museum. Wood; Fourth Dynasty, *ca.* 2600 B.C.

When it was first dug out of its age-old resting place in the early days of archaeological exploration, the sense of personal resemblance was so strong in this fine early Egyptian portrait that the native workmen spontaneously called it by the name of a local chief whom it suggested. Ever since it has been commonly referred to by his name, "Sheik-el-Beled."

Like the *Khaf-ra* (Plates I and II), this figure conveys a great sense of reality in spite of extreme economy of detail. This is no photographic naturalism, but a sensitive handling of typical Egyptian style, which the artist is able to achieve without sacrificing his practical purpose of portraiture. Somehow, in art the whole seems always to be greater than the sum of its parts. The whole can be convincingly created without including all its natural parts, as here; and all the naturalistic details may be studiously presented and yet lack the force of a significant whole, as in hack academic work or a student's anatomy drawing.

The masses of the figure seem to press outward, eliminating all minor irregularities so that the expression of bulk is paramount. The composition is absolutely static. Although standing with one foot advanced in the conventional pose of most free-standing Egyptian figures as though walking, no actual movement is felt. Both heels for example, are flat on the ground, the inactive arm is perfectly rigid, and there is a set quality about the entire pose. It will be noted, however, that there is much greater separation of parts in these wooden figures than in the *Khaf-ra* or other stone sculptures. From various details, such as the square pegs in the chest and at the elbow of the Sheik, and the separations inside the shoulders of the king, it is clear that the general practice when working in wood was to make the limbs separately and attach them. Sometimes a coating of gesso (plaster) was put over the whole to conceal irregularities. In the figure of the king, the skirt that he wears was added in that material.



PLATE V. Queen Hatshepsut with offerings of wine jugs. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Red granite; Eighteenth Dynasty, *ca.* 1480 B.C.

Although many matriarchal ideas seem to have characterized the Egyptian attitude toward women and royal succession might descend on the distaff side, only two queens ruled in the history of the country. Queen Hatshepsut, daughter of the great Thutmose I, here represented in the position of making a votive offering with two wine jugs, cultivated the arts of peace in a country but recently devoted to extensive warfare. She built the great rock-cut temple at Deir-el-Bahri according to her father's design and strengthened religious worship throughout the land. Because of the strict conventions governing Egyptian art, especially where religious subjects are concerned, the sculptors seem to have been at a loss as to what to do with the unprecedented problem of representing a queen. They settled the matter simply, by always representing Hatshepsut as a man, even including the artificial ceremonial beard. Here she is wearing the high crown that indicates that she is functioning in the role of ruler of Upper Egypt.

Egyptian interest in mass was often expressed in overlife-size or colossal statues among which the most noted is the Great Sphinx at Giza. This large red granite figure representing Hatshepsut is several times normal size, about twelve feet over all. To further the sense of bulk, detail has been suppressed to an even greater extent than usual. Even the separation of the arms from the sides of the body is indicated only by a shallow channel, and the space between the lower legs and the base is left solid. Doubtless these features result in part from the technical difficulty of penetrating hard stone with the simple tools and devices available to the Egyptian sculptor. But such factors cannot be accepted as a complete explanation of the style; for if the result were not a satisfactory aesthetic expression of the cultural objectives, the material would simply be rejected as a sculptural medium.

This figure was one of eight erected by the queen across the court of her mortuary temple at Deir-el-Bahri. Lining up life-size or colossal figures to form an avenue of approach was often done in Egyptian architecture, generally with many more than eight. The impact of the repetition of figures such as these must have been tremendous in its sense of power, but more in its expression of inevitable continuity of the basic conditions of life.



PLATE VI. Facade of the great rock-cut temple at Abu-Simbel. Nineteenth Dynasty, *ca.* 1240 B.C.

In modern times the name of Ramses II is probably the best known of all the Egyptian rulers except the late Ptolemaic empress Cleopatra and possibly "King Tut." He did much to earn this note. Ruling for the remarkable span of 67 years during the rich period of Egypt's foreign empire, he built prolifically, filling the land with his monuments, many of which embody the Egyptian love of the colossal. He added the tremendous hall of columns to the great temple at Karnak, constructed the Rameseum at Thebes which contains the remains of a colossal black granite figure of himself calculated to have weighed 1000 tons, and created the three rock-cut temples at Abu-Simbel. The greatest, here shown, has on its facade four colossal figures 65 feet in height, identical representations of Ramses himself in the conventional sitting posture of the king. The small figures between his legs, all of which are at least life size, are members of his immediate family scaled according to relative importance.

No pile of masonry, this, caused to arise by the hand of man; it was cut directly back into the living rock raised by Nature herself in the cliffs that line the Nile Valley above the delta. Many mortuary and temple structures were created in this manner during the Middle Kingdom and the New Empire. Perhaps inspired by the sense of power implied in so completely bending to human purpose the eternally enduring hills, this procedure also saved the tremendous effort of transporting quantities of material. The temple was dedicated to the sun gods of Thebes and Heliopolis, and was so oriented that the rays of the rising sun penetrated its entire length of 185 feet to light up a shrine in the innermost recesses of the sanctuary. The entire interior was lined with colored reliefs carved in the stone, including one in which Ramses as emperor worships himself as a god.



PLATE VII. (a) Statuette of a brewer. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Limestone; Fifth Dynasty, *ca.* 2500 B.C. (b) Statuette of a potter. Chicago, Oriental Institute of the University. Terra cotta; Old Kingdom, *ca.* 2600–2400 B.C.

Whether or not they are Sculpture with a capital S, no survey of human expression would be complete without recognition of the intimate and unaffected type of work represented in these early figures of a brewer and a potter. In their natural composition and simple, even rough treatment of detail, these figures are quite informal and in a sense might be considered outside the range of true sculpture in that their abstract aesthetic content has received little if any conscious consideration. They are related to a great body of similarly informal material that has been produced through the ages outside the strict conventions and elevated ideals of conscious art, direct, unassuming representations of the lives of the people. In their humor, human sympathy, and warmth, they are the most truly timeless of all forms of art.

Thus they are conceived, but their purpose, like that of so much of Egypt's art, was directly in the service of religion. In addition to preserving the body by mummification and providing a portrait statue of himself as an alternative resting place for his spirit, the Egyptian was also required, according to his notion of life after death, to provide for his activities and sustenance. This was done by placing in his tomb representations of servants, soldiers, and workers of all sorts, at least in the tombs of kings who could afford the amount of work necessary to create them. In some of the more productive periods, these were actually small models or figurines of the ministering personnel at their appointed tasks. Later they were less and less carefully done until they became small identical forms shaped like a mummy and made of clay in molds. Properly inscribed, these figures were packed away by the boxful in the king's tomb.

The brewer here shown is a Fifth Dynasty work almost a foot high, carved from limestone and painted. His companion the potter is an Old Kingdom figure in terra cotta. Both indicate the great tendency toward vigorous realism that existed in the period of the earliest formation of Egypt's culture.

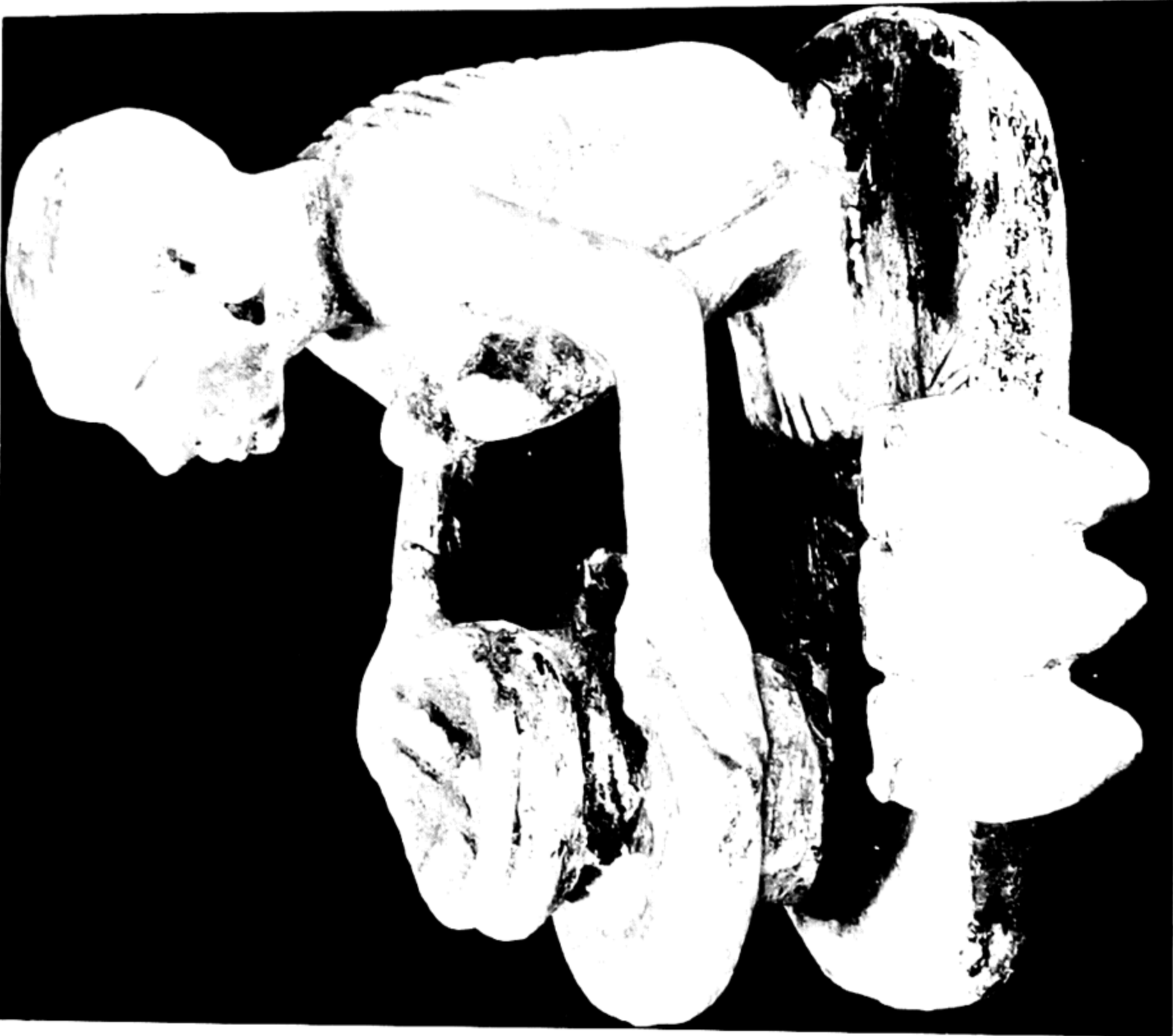


PLATE VIII. Servant carrying food. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Wood; Eleventh Dynasty, *ca.* 2000 B.C.

The king, Meket-Re of the Eleventh Dynasty, decreed that two peasant girls carrying provisions should walk in his funeral procession, and thus it was represented in his tomb. This is one of the peasant girls with a duck in her right hand and various cuts of meat in a basket on her head. It was customary to represent every detail of the funeral procession in the king's tomb, including models of the funerary barges carrying his mummy and his ka statue up the Nile to their eternal resting places. Presumably these objects like other contents of the tomb were to make provision for the life after death, but certainly the Egyptians could not have anticipated another demise in the future world. The presence of such objects must simply have been an illogical projection of the idea of repeating all the material appurtenances of life on earth, unless it was to gain the respect of the spirit world by showing them how elegantly one had been buried.

The figure is about three feet high and shows very well how the rigid verticality of the conventional Egyptian standing or walking pose can impart a decorative quality as of a delicate architectural column. This basic directional pattern is repeated in details such as the right arm where the articulation of the elbow is practically omitted, and in the strictly vertical masses of falling hair. There is no displacement of horizontal axes to disturb the static rigidity either for the gesture of walking or even for the up-raised arm holding the basket.

This figure is of wood and the color is excellently preserved. Even in the black-and-white photograph it can readily be seen how much interest is added to the simple form by the bright pattern of the dress and the sharp definition of the features. It brings out the fact that Egyptian sculpture was colored in approximately natural though somewhat simplified tones, excepting sculpture in stone hard enough to take a polish. In such cases details only, such as eyes and parts of dress, were picked out in color.



PLATE IX. Relief sculpture: (a) Portion of principal offering scene from the mortuary temple of Sesostris I, 1970–1935 B.C. Twelfth Dynasty, Lisht. (b) Portion of triumphal stela, Amenophis III (1411–1375 B.C.) Thebes. Limestone. Eighteenth Dynasty.

Untold effort was expended in raising massive architectural monuments to resist in the memory of Man the persistent erosion of Time. The messages of these great stone “time capsules”—the name, the genealogy, the exploits in war and peace of the personality thus to be perpetuated—were conveyed in the relief sculpture and attendant inscriptions that lined the interiors of tomb and temple alike. In the upper panel faithful friends and officials bring offerings to the pharaoh for his sustenance in the life after death. The royal gardener was one of the procession, and the man carrying the crate of widgeons, the pair of ducks, and the stone bowl of lotus flowers was the administrator of the province of Dep.

Below, Amenophis III, father of the famous heretic king Akhenaten (Plate XII) parades bound prisoners of war. The vast empire subjugated by earlier rulers of the warlike Eighteenth Dynasty was well in hand at his accession and a minimum of this sort of thing was required of him. The wealth of tribute, captive slave labor, and freedom from military concern enabled this Amenophis to embark on a great building program, which included construction of the Temple of Luxor, avenues of rams and other additions to the Great Temple at Karnak, and the famous pair of sandstone colossi known to the Greeks by the name of the Homeric hero Memnon. These tremendous figures, with heads three feet ten inches in height, stood before the king’s funerary temple of which no other trace remains.

Relief sculpture means the raising of forms on a two-dimensional area. Modeled in various depths from low relief or (French) *bas relief* like that on a coin, to high relief in which the figures are given full natural depth, the composition must be arranged in respect to a plane almost as in painting. Relief sculpture in Egypt was invariably very low and painted throughout. Low relief in Western art involves some adjustment to take care of the reduction of the third dimension, similar to modern techniques of perspective drawing. Since Egypt never considers space in sculpture, however, the idea of unified perspective was never developed. Depth in the figure was shown by the arbitrary convention of turning each part independently to its broadest or most suggestive profile—head, legs, and feet from the side, eyes, hands, and torso from the front.

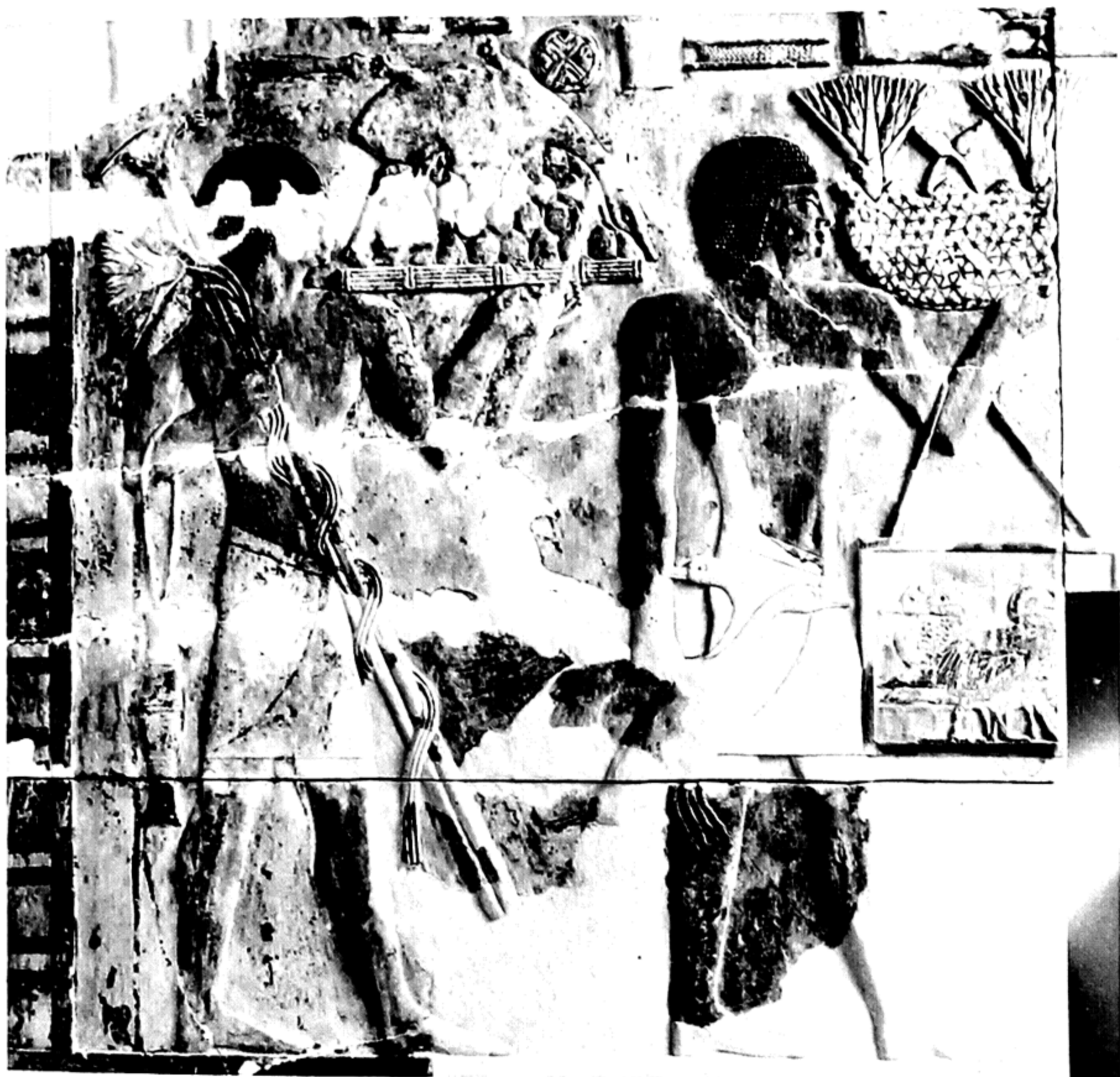


PLATE X. Relief sculpture: kitchen and herding scenes, from Lisht. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Limestone; probably Sixth Dynasty, *ca.* 2430 B.C.

Destined to minister through the ages to the needs of some Sixth Dynasty ruler, these busy creatures were rudely uprooted and the slab on which they were carved was used as a door in the Twelfth Dynasty. Though the Egyptians were fully dedicated to religious concerns, religious monuments were often despoiled, and whole buildings were carried off, block by block, to provide material for some later monarch, generally of another dynasty. Some of the poorer kings actually went so far as to substitute their own names on sculptures originally dedicated to others. Never until comparatively recent times, as a matter of fact, have preservation and study of cultural monuments of the past been considered especially important except, of course, when regarded as the shrine of a living interest.

As they busily prepared water fowl for the oven, the movements of the two serving men in the upper section put considerable strain on the schematic Egyptian devices for representing the depth of the figure. But somehow or other the essential description of the subject is realized, and the flow of the fine contours without interruption by minor detail imparts a sprightly and vivid character to the work. No extension of form or space in depth is permitted by the conventions of Egyptian relief sculpture, consequently there is practically no overlapping nor representation of environment except that actually related to the figures. Only when there is a series of identical forms like those of the herd in the lower section, are they permitted to come one before another. Then nothing is obscured as the nearest gives an adequate description of the rest, for the literal-minded Egyptian. "Coming out of the marsh guiding the herd" is inscribed on this relief, and the occasional detail, which indicates the true sensitiveness of the Egyptian sculptor to reality in spite of the conventional limitations so curious to modern eyes, is seen in the way he has made the leading animal lift its head in response to the cries of the calf on the herdsman's back.



PLATE XI. Island relief: Stela of Ramose, priest in the Theban necropolis.
Florence. Limestone; Twentieth Dynasty, 1200–1090 B.C.

Egyptian regard for the life after death is indicated by the inscription on this stela of Ramose, which identifies the Theban necropolis (cemetery) where he was a “servitor,” probably priest or high priest, by the name of “the Place of Truth.” Founded after a brief and obscure interregnum under a Syrian conqueror, the Twentieth Dynasty soon achieved relative stability under Ramses III, and considerable cultural production was undertaken. His successors, however, were less able, and Egypt was racked by internal strife and attacks of various groups of Mediterranean and Asiatic raiders. Much hardship resulted throughout the country. A papyrus tells of a strike that took place in the Theban necropolis itself, when starving laborers refused to continue their work unless they were given corn.

This stela shows an interesting variation from the normal type of relief sculpture, invented by the Egyptians and used nowhere else. The material between the figures is left at the original surface of the block, and what we think of as the “background,” *i.e.*, the space between the figures, is really a series of slightly projecting masses. This type is hence called “island relief.” It has the effect of showing a heavy dark outline against the light side of the figure, and consequently is thought by some to have been invented for the purpose of making the reliefs more visible in the glaring Egyptian sunlight. However, island relief is used freely indoors. Very possibly, since the space between the figures was considered merely a blank, and not surrounding atmosphere or deep space as in most European composition, the Egyptian saw no point in the laborious effort to cut away and smooth these areas.

The deceased and his wife receive offerings in the lower section of the stela and greet several gods above. An elementary sense of composition in respect to the limits of the panel, unusual in Egyptian reliefs, which are generally just strung out in continuous bands along a wall, is felt here in the way each half of the panel is divided into balanced groups facing inward. The offering table in the upper section is also raised above the “floor” level to indicate that it is behind the figures. However there is not yet sufficient organization in depth to create a sensory illusion of space.



PLATE XII. Portrait of the king, Akhenaten (1375–1358 B.C.) Cairo, Museum. Stone; Eighteenth Dynasty, *ca.* 1360 B.C.

For the seventeen years of his brief reign, this imaginative and strong-willed young despot attempted to impose fundamental cultural changes upon the Egyptian people, which are breath-taking to contemplate. Dissatisfied with the curious hodgepodge that was Egyptian religion, he decreed monotheism! His new religion was based on worship of an impersonal supreme power identified with the sun as the source of all life. Aten was the name he gave it, and in the extensive process of eradicating every trace of the old religion, he even changed his own name, Amenophis, which contained the name of the old chief Egyptian god Amen, to Akhenaten (variously spelled Ikhnaton and similarly). That was not all. Every reference to the old gods was suppressed and, to get away from the large and powerful priesthood that was antagonistic to his reforms, Akhenaten in the first six years of his reign built himself a new capital city.

There is nothing but speculation to account for this remarkable turn of events. Before Akhenaten's ascent to the throne, Egypt had acquired an empire extending up through Asia Minor and had trading contacts even beyond. Possibly religious ideas more sophisticated than those of Egypt filtered down from the eastern lands. Possibly a sense of universality stimulated by the wide extent of the godly power he inherited may have arisen spontaneously in Akhenaten's mind. Some offer the rather mechanical explanation that in his youth he may have been associated with one of the ancient cults of sun worship, such as that of Heliopolis, but the practices he established show no correspondence. At any rate he pursued with unswerving determination a thoroughgoing reform which penetrated many aspects of Egyptian culture. The empire outside Egypt, however, was neglected and permitted to break up. The antagonism of the old priesthood, deprived of power and revenue, was never overcome, and the people perhaps for this reason never understood or accepted the new order. At the comparatively early death of the king all the changes he had made were swept away, the capital was returned to the old site, and the new one was destroyed.



PLATE XIII. Portrait of Queen Nefertete. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; from original in Berlin. Stone, colored; Eighteenth Dynasty, *ca.* 1360 B.C.

This is the fragile beauty of Nefertete, Akhenaten's queen. Only with some realization of her physical presence such as this can one really begin to speculate what her life with the god-making king can have been like. It is an interesting subject, for how would a man of such all-embracing perspective treat his immediate associates? The Russian novelist Dmitri Merezhkovski built the slight record of their lives into a quite lengthy account. According to all outward signs Akhenaten was an affectionate husband. He was a man of peace, a thinker, a poet, and a sensitive patron of the arts.

In painting and sculpture Akhenaten decreed that the natural model must be followed as closely as possible, all arbitrary conventions discarded. Within limits, remarkable development was made in this direction as will be seen from this portrait. Here of course the coloring contributes a great deal to the effect of reality, but also important is the subtle development of planes suggesting subsurface detail. Muscular anatomy as well as the underlying bony structure in the cheek are conveyed with understanding precision, as in the modeling around the corner of the mouth for example. Similarly convincing detail is apparent in the preceding head of the king himself. Though it may appear simplified by contrast with modern impressionistic technique, the detail in these heads is even more natural than in the most lifelike of previous Egyptian portraits. Some evidence exists which may indicate that systematic study was being attempted toward the objective of naturalism in sculpture. With this head in the so-called "House of the Sculptor" at Tell el-Amarna, the ruins of Akhenaten's capital, was found a series of masks apparently from living and dead faces.



PLATE XIV. Votive relief of Akhenaten and members of his family. Cairo, Museum. Stone; Eighteenth Dynasty, *ca.* 1360 B.C.

Several millenia before the scientific examination of actinic rays and photosynthesis, Akhenaten decreed that the sun should be worshipped as the giver of all life on earth. To symbolize this, the new god was represented by a disk from which rays extended in all directions, ending in tiny hands. Here, in island relief, are Akhenaten with his wife and one of his seven daughters, making a votive offering of wine to the god Aten represented by the disk symbol. Although at first glance the figures seem much like those of other Egyptian reliefs, especially in their conventional adaptation to the strictly profile view, it will be noted that individual personal characteristics, in line with Akhenaten's edict of naturalism, are exaggerated practically to the point of caricature. This affected no one worse than the king himself, for in most of his reliefs he is shown with the long thin neck, thick lips, and pointed chin that appear here, although from the previous portrait in the round it is evident that his appearance was not quite so bizarre. A more ingratiating result of his revolt against formalism in art is the charming and graceful intimacy introduced into representations of the royal family. Affectionate gestures are exchanged among the king, his wife, and their children in a manner quite unprecedented in the conventionally stiff groups of earlier ages.

There is also a feeling of gentle undulation especially in the oddly bulging contours of the figures, which distinguishes reliefs of this period from the more severely straight-lined and angular style generally apparent in Egyptian reliefs. This characteristic may also have been inspired by the attempt to introduce a feeling of movement and life, or simply to break with the past. The difference in size of the three figures is a common device for expressing their difference of importance in many styles where no implications of deep space exist.



PLATE XV. Portrait of a general, Har-em-hab. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Stone; Eighteenth Dynasty, *ca.* 1358–1353 B.C.

This calm, sweet-faced figure bears no hint of the efficient, realistic military personality whose bodily appearance it presents. The psychological portrait, unless we include some of the remarkable achievements of Roman art and a few other isolated instances, did not truly come into being until the Italian High Renaissance. A general of the armies of Akhenaten, Har-em-hab became commander in chief under his son-in-law and successor, Tutankhamen. At this post he led the counterrevolution that abolished the heretical worship of Aten, although he had been apparently a loyal supporter of the king during his lifetime. After reigning as virtual dictator until the death of Tutankhamen and Ay who followed him, the long-lived general elevated himself to the position of pharaoh to complete the job of straightening out the upset country, which he appears to have done in an effective manner.

The end of the reign of Akhenaten and the period of unrest, confusion, and terror that followed it coincide according to some calculations with the period of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Dr. Sigmund Freud in his book *Moses and Monotheism* has advanced the interesting and plausible theory that the lawgiver of the "chosen people" was actually an Egyptian of high court rank who was so deeply disappointed at the collapse of Akhenaten's idealistic reforms that he elected a life of hardship and poverty to prevent their complete banishment from the face of the earth. Thus Hebrew monotheism, the basis of modern Western religion, would be a heritage from Akhenaten, the heretic king of Egypt, perpetuated as were the reforms of Christ by an inspired zealot.

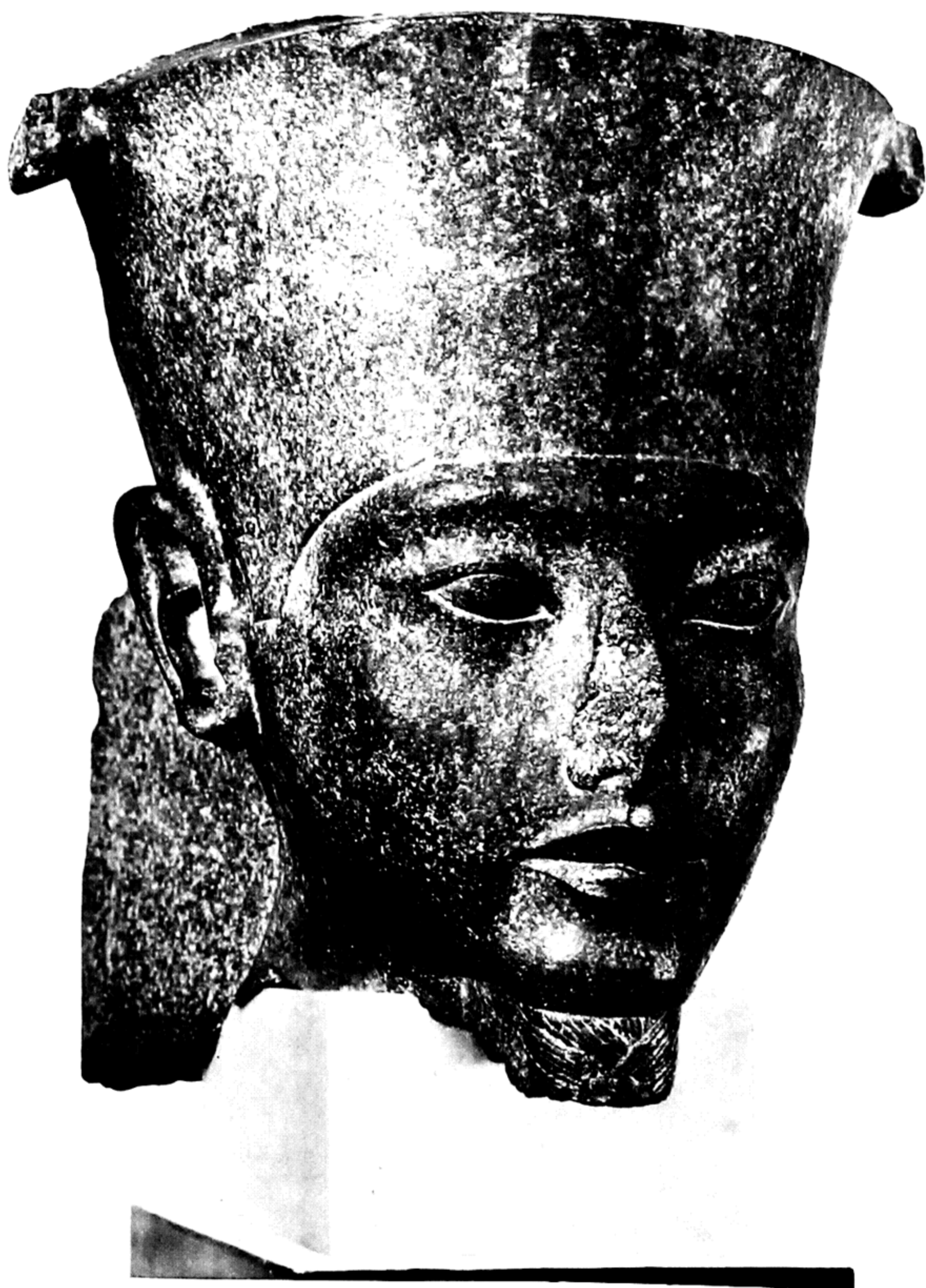
This statue of the general presents the static solidity of typical Egyptian work, with limbs virtually melting into the main mass of the figure, the legs little more than surface indications. But a sort of liveliness is imparted to the design by the undulating lines of the short sleeves, across the torso, and at the waist, and in the thin parallel folds of the skirt around the hips and over the knees.



PLATE XVI. Head of the god Amen. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gray granite; Eighteenth Dynasty, *ca.* 1350 B.C.

“The evil that men do lives after them,” said Antony, “the good is oft interred with their bones,” but he was speaking of a man’s repute, and besides he had an ax to grind. Akhenaten’s fame was certainly black after his death, but to judge from this fine head of the god Amen (Amon, Amen-Ra, etc.), the ferment and stimulation due to his reforms in art must have had a salutary effect for some time after his death. Amen was the chief god of the Egyptian hierarchy, dispossessed of his position by the heresy of Akhenaten. Since this head was made at the time of the restoration of polytheism, its vitality may be due on the other hand to the feeling of triumphant exaltation in a partisan of the old regime. No one can ever decide such matters with finality, but the attempt to feel one’s self into the expression of the work and determine the message it conveys is one of the most stimulating forms of participation in art of the past or the present.

Like most of the more important Egyptian statuary this head is of quite hard material, a dark gray granite. In view of the simple tools employed and relatively soft materials of which they were made, the extensive use of hard materials such as this in Egypt is an unending source of wonder. Undoubtedly great quantities of slowly progressing labor were used, and much of the final work was done by abrasion. Emery was known to have been used in the crafts from early times in Egypt and could be rubbed against the surfaces by wooden implements. A technique of this sort would account, in the limited degree that such mechanical factors can have significance, for some of the subtle simplicity in the modeling of surfaces. The reduction of detail, which it necessitates, and the resulting emphasis on generalized mass is here accomplished as in the best Egyptian work without mechanically losing the sense of life.



GREECE AND ROME

MAN'S IMAGE

MODERN advertising has implied that civilization improves environment inevitably, year after year. This year's marvel of an automobile, refrigerator, or vacuum cleaner is described as the result of painstaking development of an originally impractical but visionary gadget to the present state of magical perfection. Within limits this is true of mechanical devices and even to a certain extent of scientific techniques, but it is interesting to note how often the opposite is true in the cultural realm. Many ideas, creations, media have been presented to mankind by the civilization or individual who conceived them in a form so perfect or complete that little if anything is ever done that goes beyond the original accomplishment.

The culture of ancient Greece, which flowered in a few short centuries before the Christian Era, remarkably embodied the essential expression of many forms and ideas still basic in Western civilization today. Euclidean geometry, the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the poetry of Sappho are considered important pillars of our present culture. Greek philosophers made the first attempt to work out logical principles of human life, and their ideas form the basis for much of philosophical study today, as witness the familiar terms Stoic, Cynic, Epicurean, Socratic, Platonic, Aristotelian, and academic. Although we think of natural science as being the discovery of the last century or two, it was Aristotle, subsidized by Alexander the Great, who set up an organization of thousands of observers throughout the land in the first attempt to develop scientific knowledge by means of systematic natural observation.

The art of Greece, likewise, has remained a model and criterion for western civilization in many ways, and the phrase "classic beauty" sums up a great section of contemporary Western ideology in the plastic arts. Just what does it mean? So far as form is concerned, the characteristics of classic style can best be described in relation to specific examples among the plates that follow. But to understand its human message one must be prepared with some knowledge of the ideas and principles of Greek life which it expressed.

Greek sculpture was concerned with nothing so much as the celebration of Man. As the art of three-dimensional form it took to itself the function of creating his image in the most glorious aspects possible, and in so doing it expressed the proverbial Greek view that "man is the measure of all things." The belief that man is able to cope directly with the forces of nature has been basic in Western thought to the present day. It started almost 3000 years ago on that mountainous little peninsula projecting southward from central Europe and bordering on the Aegean Sea, and marked a complete break from the religio-mystic view of Man's individual insignificance which predominated in the teeming valley of Egypt's Nile and other early civilizations to the east.

To be sure the ancient Greeks worshipped supernatural deities. But the Greek gods were essentially a superior group of people who ran things in the way a powerful noble family might. Each governed a fairly definite aspect of human life—war, love, marriage, medicine, trade, agriculture—in a rather whimsical fashion completely comprehensible in terms of human motives. By going through the proper motions—gifts, libations, sacrifices—a human being could ask the gods for special favors. In Homer and the great tragedies men and women even come to grips with the gods and survive their wrath by personal prowess and connivance with other gods. When they go to their doom, it is with a dignity that shows them to be on a plane spiritually with their Olympian adversaries.

With this point of view the Greeks did not take the world as they found it, but attempted constantly to alter it to their own ends. Consistent cultural change was far more pronounced in 300 years of Greek history than in 3000 years of Egyptian history, and in this dynamic evolutionary tendency we see the pattern of Hellenic life as the forerunner of our own. Two other marked characteristics of Greek life result from their concept of the position of Man in the universe: philosophy and individualism.

The instrument of human accomplishment is human intelligence, and it was the recognition of the analytical power of Man's mind that gave the Greek people a belief in their ability to survive and surpass on the basis of their own efforts. Consequently pagan religion was not the sole guide to life for the intelligent Greek citizen, and soon philosophy shared or completely assumed this role for many. As an expression of this faith in logical understanding, a sense of measure, clarity, regularity, and ideal beauty is embodied in all of Greek art.

Man's power in his struggle with the natural universe arises of course from social cooperation in the struggle for existence. The resulting security gives birth, especially among a sparse population, to the idea of individual personal importance, an outstanding characteristic of the Greek view of life which we inherit today. Unfortunately, individualism occasionally blinds men to their dependence on their fellows,

and in this way produced in Greece a record of repeated treachery and disunion which darkens the political side of her otherwise brilliant history. For the Greeks, though they had a common language, religion, economic system, form of government, and even a national consciousness of a sort, owed allegiance first to the city-state—Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Miletus, Aegina, Delphi—histories of 158 of them were prepared by the students of Aristotle. Each sought the success of his own particular community without regard for the well-being of others, sometimes even by treacherous connivance against his neighbor with a common enemy.

It cannot be denied, however, that the concept of individual personal importance, which is a corollary of the broader concept of Man's central importance in the universe, stimulates human ingenuity and production under favorable conditions and inspired Greek democracy. Western civilization has advanced, however, not because of individualism itself, but through recurrent identification of the interests of the individual with larger and larger social units. Greek civilization perished because the Greek citizen was unable to expand his sense of social responsibility sufficiently to sustain the various federations or leagues set up from time to time among the city-states as their expanding political problems required.

Defeated but reborn in the conquests of Alexander the Great, Greek culture was spread by this enlightened despot throughout his far-flung empire. Something of the Athenian precision and coldness was lost by admixture of local Eastern characteristics of warmth, mystery, and color, producing a result which is generally called Hellenistic, but in its new form and in its new homes Greek civilization was nurtured for another thousand years.

Rome soon became the political leader of the Mediterranean world, absorbing the Eastern empire and penetrating far to the north, through France and Spain to the British Isles. Tremendous developments were made in the way of military, political, and economic organization, and in architecture in respect to techniques of construction; but in general Latin cultural expression followed the Greek model. Roman gods and the mythology of their careers corresponded closely with the Greek except for changes of name. The Greek architectural orders formed the basis of the decoration of monumental Roman buildings. Roman sculptors followed or copied Greek models, and Roman provincial governors brought back shiploads of "Greek antiquities" from the east to adorn their villas in and about Rome. Thus was begun the dissemination in the west of Hellenic culture as Alexander had spread it to the east, perpetuating its influence on human life down to the very present.

PLATE XVII. Archaic Apollo-type figure. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Marble; sixth century B.C.

Schematic as the proof of a proposition in Euclidean geometry, this archaic Apollo-type figure is a concrete demonstration of the pervasive logical influence of Greek thought on Greek life. Insofar as it is understood, the anatomy of the figure is indicated with an unmistakable intention of symmetrical clarity, in the two little muscular scallops over each kneecap, the angular line of the groins precisely reversed in the lower line of the rib cage, the way the sides of the figure swing in at the waist and out again rhythmically in the fullness of the thighs. The smooth, unbroken quality of the mass of each separate part adds to this feeling of a structure composed of clear, elemental units.

The sense of rationality is furthered by a feeling of regular rhythmic measure throughout the whole. The distances from ankle to kneecap, to the top of the groin line, to the collarbone, all major separations, seem equal; limbs equally divided, a general sense of commensurability of all parts, and all horizontal divisions absolutely bisymmetrical. The thumb precisely divides the curiously triangular fist, and coincides with the axis of the arm. Thus we see the Greek sculptor struggling through a logic of measured pattern to produce his ideal of the world's most glorious creature, Man.

Many figures surprisingly close to this type were made in the archaic period of Greek sculpture, *i.e.*, from about the middle of the seventh century to the end of the sixth century B.C. The term "Apollo" was applied generically by early archaeologists, but they do not necessarily represent that or any other god. They may well have been commemorative statues to honor a human hero, a brave warrior, or a victorious athlete. Whatever the subject, it was essentially neither king nor god as in Egypt but the image of Man the sculptor celebrated, as indicated by the complete absence of symbolical garb or trappings of any sort.

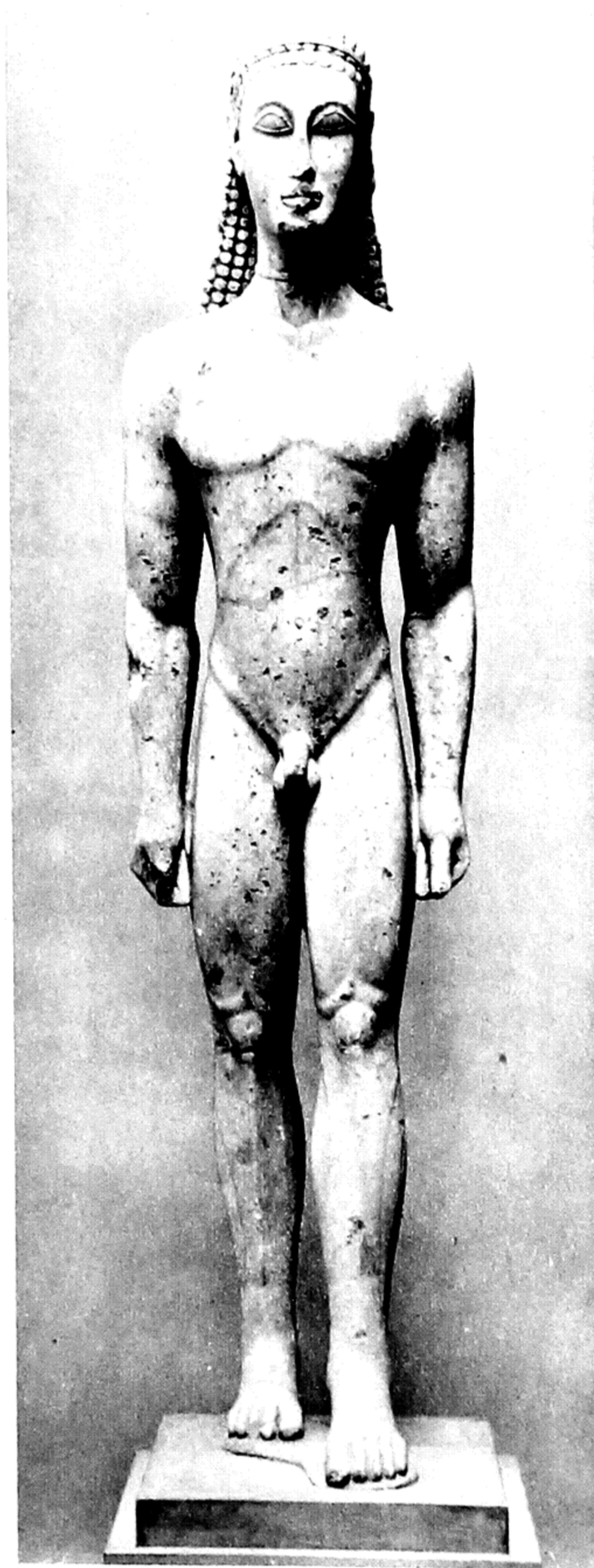


PLATE XVIII. (a) Archaic Athena, Doric type. Painted limestone, sixth century B.C. (b) Archaic Athena, Ionic type. Painted limestone; *ca.* 540–510 B.C. Athens, Acropolis Museum.

A true sense of life is added to these otherwise simply formed archaic "Athena" figures by the use of color, which was not left entirely to the painter in Greece but was considered a part of the sculptural medium as well. Early works in soft stones, such as sandstone or limestone, were usually completely colored. Later when fine light-colored marble was used, color was applied only to details and parts of clothing, portions representing flesh being polished. Enamel and gilt were used to pick out details in bronze works. Invariably the color was used as an intrinsic part of the design. In the figure on the left the regular wavelike pattern of the hair is made to stand out dark against the light background of flesh and clothing. Color gives the eyes and lips their natural emphasis, and the columnar simplicity of the figure is enriched by the painted design of the dress of which only traces remain. In both figures textile decoration is concentrated principally in a border along the edges of the garments, which serves to bring out their structure with the logical clarity of description characteristic of Greek art.

There is a striking variation among the series of archaic female figures known as "Athenas," which fall into two distinct groups. The simpler type with a plain, tubular upper garment like that on the left was made in peninsular (*i.e.*, European) Greece and is called "Doric." The other, with a much more elaborate costume and headdress is the Ionic type, which came from the eastern shores of the Aegean Sea, now the west coast of Turkey. These differences reflect the historical development of Greek culture. A high pre-Hellenic civilization had existed in various parts of the lands that became Greece, but it disappeared toward the end of the first millenium before Christ. Migrating tribes from the north invaded the peninsula of European Greece in waves for the next few centuries, ruthlessly destroying the culture they found. Similar hordes crossed the Hellespont and descended the coast of Asia Minor. The invaders of the peninsula were known as Dorians, hence characteristics of the Greek culture of this region are distinguished by the term "Doric." The opposite shore of the Aegean was known as Ionia, and thus the term "Ionic" was similarly used in respect to general peculiarities of Asiatic Greek culture.



PLATE XIX. Birth of Aphrodite. Rome, Museo delle Terme. Stone; *ca.*
480 B.C.

Two nymphs preside at the birth of Aphrodite, goddess of love, who was born from the sea. Though a goddess she stretches out her arms for assistance and glances up gratefully at one of them, as they hold a cloth to wrap around her clinging, water-soaked garments. It would be difficult to find a more frankly human picture of a god or goddess in the whole history of art.

Although in quite low relief, the sculptor has conceived his figures moving in space. The three arms, one before another, clearly establish the full depth of the group. The turn of Aphrodite's head implies the space in which it occurs, and her hair falling down in front of her face and back over her shoulder cleverly suggests the movement itself, as well as the depth of her body. Even the two gracefully waving lines of the edges of the cloth as it falls from the hands of the nymphs sets up a spiral movement suggesting space. No background is presented, however, for a strictly sculptural type of relief was employed in Greek art until the Hellenistic period, and consequently these figures were made to fill the space in a simple but carefully considered pattern of concentric distribution about the head of the goddess. Probably an altar for the worship of Aphrodite, the block of which this relief decorates the front side, is sometimes referred to as a throne.



PLATE XX. End reliefs from altar of Aphrodite. Rome, Museo delle Terme.
Stone; *ca.* 480 B.C.

Possibly some implication of sacred and profane love, which the great Venetian painter Titian represented by the same contrast 2000 years later at the height of the Italian Renaissance, is intended in these female figures, one clothed and the other nude. This is borne out to some extent by the fact that the nude figure is playing a musical instrument, while the other is occupied with the religious or domestic activity of burning incense. They are found at the ends of the block on the face of which is the fine relief of the *Birth of Aphrodite* (Plate XIX), and their suave though simple perfection shows the remarkable progress made by the Greek sculptor toward his ideal of natural representation of the human figure in the brief space of a few generations.

Measure and pattern are no longer so obvious in these figures, but the clarity of parts and the simple fullness of each is definitely maintained. No irrelevant anatomical detail disturbs the fleshy rounds of nude limbs, and folds of drapery are kept shallow and distinctly subordinate to the forms they surround. Depth is suggested in the complex pattern of the crossed knees of the nude, the hand holding a tray or a basket of the other, and the skillful sense of projection in the shoulders of both without their being extended beyond the front plane of the relief. An important problem in this type of relief sculpture is to develop the modeling so as to sustain the relief plane properly throughout the design. Each fullness of form must be brought out a distance uniform with all the others, and yet somehow its natural position in depth must be suggested. This is done masterfully in these figures, and the sense of power and fullness conveyed is due partly to the close composition of these eminences, no weakening hollow being permitted to occur in the central area.

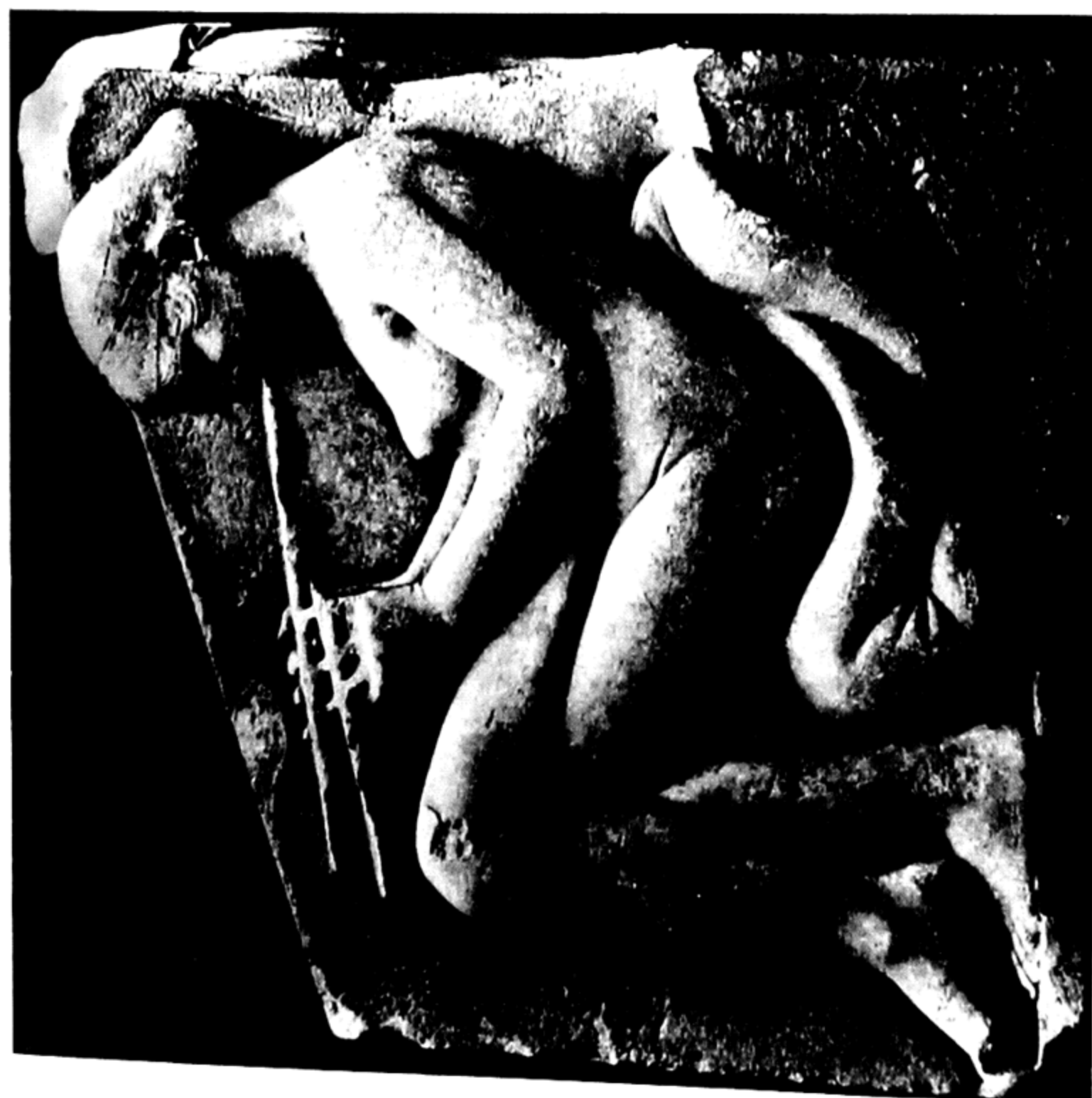


PLATE XXI. (a) Relief from the "Satrap Sarcophagus," Istanbul. Marble, early fifth century B.C. (b) Procession of horsemen, south side, and (c) Battle of gods and giants, north side, frieze from the treasury of Siphnos at Delphi. Delphi Museum. Marble; *ca.* 525 B.C.

The gods are beating back rebellious giants to their place of confinement in the underworld in the relief at the bottom of the opposite page, illustrating a story that possibly arose in connection with the periodic phenomenon of volcanic activity. In the man-centered, logical culture of Greece the gods always won these encounters, but the mystic religion of northern Europe, in its awe of nature, conceived many weird supernatural creatures not so completely under control. When Thor goes to the home of the giants to assert the authority of the gods, they make him look silly in tests of his physical prowess. With all his strength he can barely budge an old gray cat lying on the hearth; his deepest draughts make only the slightest impression on the liquor in the drinking horn; and the haggard old woman they challenge him to wrestle with throws him again and again. The giants magnanimously compliment him, however, on the little he has been able to do, for the old gray cat is attached to the line running through the center of the earth, the ocean that surrounds the earth runs into the drinking horn, and the old crone is the force of gravity. That is the character of primitive religion in regions where the forces of nature give mankind a real tussle.

The relative ease of human survival in the south permits men to feel confidence in their logical analysis of environment, giving rise to a clear pattern of thought in cultural expression. Thus there is an obvious element of clarity in Greek sculpture. This appears in the fine simple pattern of the forms in the upper panel, which is virtually a regular alternation of verticals and horizontals giving a sense of rhythmic movement to the combination of otherwise static elements. All of these reliefs are composed in terms of the forms represented without any suggestion of environment or deep space. Although considerable overlapping occurs, the whole is conceived strictly and literally as surface decoration of the basic structural plane, *i.e.*, as a series of projections from the wall of the building or of the sarcophagus rather than as a windowlike penetration through it. All movement, even the directional implication of the faces, is parallel to the relief plane. This is the pure sculptural or "classic" form of relief, as distinct from the illusionistic or pictorial (Plates XXXV and LXII) which were developed later.



PLATE XXII. (a) Zeus or Poseidon. Athens, National Museum. Bronze; ca. 470 B.C. (b) Spear bearer (Doryphoros) by Polykleitos. Naples, Museum. ca. 450 B.C.

Still glorifying the central creature of the universe, the Greek sculptor achieves greater detail and a sense of natural movement in the standing male figure during the latter half of the fifth century, a period often referred to as the Golden Age of Greece. Fullness, commensurability, and patterned clarity of component parts are quite apparent in these figures, but the anatomical description has become more natural and somewhat more detailed than in the work of the archaic period (Plates XVII and XVIII). The *Spear Bearer* was consciously intended to embody ideal measurements of the male figure, and as a consequence is sometimes called *The Canon*.

The figures are still composed as a column, though no longer as rigid as the archaic Apollos, and the limbs move freely about. They may be said to be composed in relation to an imaginary capsule of space, determined by extending the area of the base upward to the top of the head. They fill this volume generously and exceed it but slightly, as for example in the thin line of the missing spear of the *Doryphoros* or the probably out-stretched triton- or bolt-throwing arms of the Poseidon (Neptune) or Zeus figure.

All free-standing monumental statues in the fifth century were cast in bronze, as the result of the discovery or importation a short time previous of the "lost-wax" method of hollow casting. Most Greek bronzes have been lost, however, because of the ready convertibility of this valuable material into weapons and implements. However, many of the bronzes carried off by the Roman imperial governors in later years were copied by Roman sculptors in marble, which though often broken in wars and earthquakes or even for the lime kiln have survived in considerable numbers. Stumps and props like that at the wrist of the *Spear Bearer*, unnecessary in the lighter less brittle material of the original, must be added for support, and there is no guarantee of the accuracy of the copyist. But in this case, the linear pattern of the hair suggests the manner in which it was generally treated in Greek bronzes, and presumably therefore the resemblance is faithful.

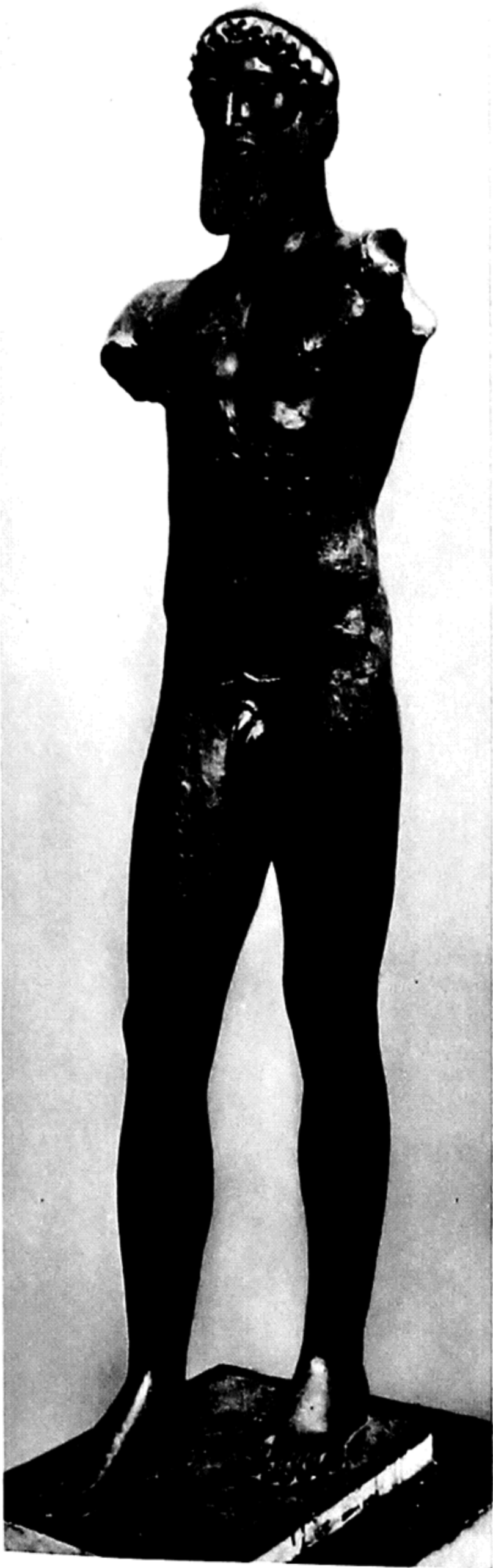


PLATE XXIII. Discus thrower (Discobolus) by Myron. Rome, Vatican.
ca. 450 B.C.

Athletic performance was to the Greeks a quite natural symbol of man's physical power over his environment, and gymnastics were a constant activity of the male Greek citizen from earliest youth almost throughout his life. Every four years champions from the entire nation met in the Olympic games, and one was crowned victor, a practice that dated from 776 B.C., the earliest known date in respect to established Greek culture. This practice of honoring the superior individual indicates clearly that the concept of the importance of the individual man soon arose from emphasis of the central importance of man in the universe.

Such a philosophy could occur only among a sparse population in a region where the resources of life were less abundant than in the rich semitropical river valleys that had produced the earlier eastern cultures of Egypt and Asia Minor. Though presumably better than the lands that the invading Dorians had abandoned, only one-fifth of Greece's mountainous rocky soil is arable, and agriculture as the main source of income was replaced by trade and manufacture in the great period of Hellenic culture. Thus seasonal regularity and dependence upon natural resources, which played so great a part in formulating cultural outlook in Egypt, were less a determining factor in Greek life than the ingenuity and creative effort of the individual. Consequently the recurrent individualistic emphasis in Greek culture was a direct expression of life, gratifying to them as a fulfillment of the proper order of things, illuminating to us as a concrete reflection of the Greek view of life.

Several copies have been found, most of them in marble, of the famous *Discobolus* by Myron, one of the great sculptors of the Golden Age in Greece. This is a restoration combining several fragments. The two small knobs at the front of the head remain from the ducts in the mold for pouring the molten bronze, one to admit it and the other to let out the air.



PLATE XXIV. Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs, from the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. Olympia, Museum. Marble; *ca.* 480 B.C.

Apollo directs the fate of men in battle with monsters more as though he were a mortal commander than a powerful god. This human character of the Greek gods and their intimacy with human heroes is a recurrent theme of Greek art. Human superiority in nature is shown by the calm vigor of the Lapiths in contrast with the half-animal centaurs, who have pudgy, snubnosed, and bearded faces and who grimace excitedly.

The figures are composed to fit into the long low triangles known as "pediments," which are formed at each end of the Greek temple by the slope of its roof. The buildings were carefully oriented with the major axis running from east to west and entrances at either or both ends. Subjects decorating the pediments at the respective ends were interestingly contrasted, that to the west being a scene of turbulence or struggle as in this instance, that to the east being calm and quiet. The logical clarity of Greek art appears in the strictly bisymmetrical composition, and in the clear, rather dry quality of the anatomy seen in the two reclining figures which faced inward at the extreme angles of the pediment. Their gestures serve to hold together the extended composition as much as to express intent concern over the outcome of the struggle.

Pediment figures, like most architectural sculpture, were executed in the same stone as that used for the building, generally marble after the archaic period. Thus we see here the original work from the hand of a Greek stone carver. Color was used throughout, and the caplike treatment of the hair in the lower figure is doubtless accounted for by the fact that in these minor positions details were inserted by the painter.

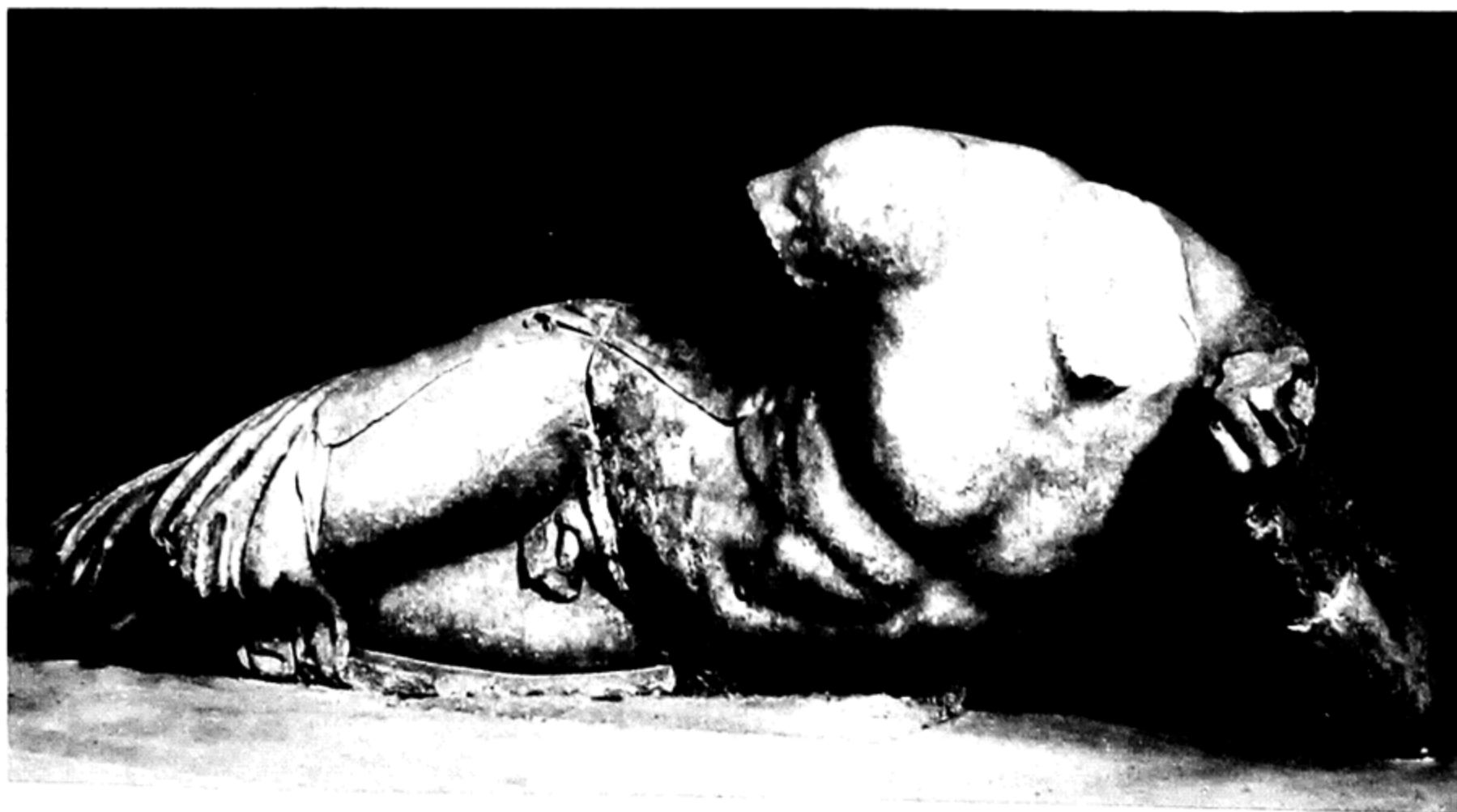


PLATE XXV. The Three Fates, from the east pediment of the Parthenon at Athens, by Pheidias. London, British Museum. Marble; 447–438 B.C.

Badly weathered and broken as they are, the force inherent in these figures is nevertheless so great that they epitomize the style of Greece's greatest sculptor, Pheidias (also Phidias or Phidius) and the style of her Golden Age as it developed under his hand. On the east pediment of the Temple of Athena Parthenos (the Virgin Athena) on the Acropolis of Athens, they were a part of the crowning glory of the greatest building in the nation. The subject of the entire composition was the birth of Athena, who sprang full-grown from the head of Zeus. Far to the right, almost in the angle of the pediment, sat these three figures, generally presumed to represent the Three Fates, two of whom spun the thread of human life as the third cut it off. Unlike the Olympian pediment, the outermost figures here face outward, the innermost facing toward the action at the center. The horizontal axes of the limbs of these figures and the directions in which they are facing cooperate in this clear, simple pattern of two series of fanlike radiations, which unify both halves of the composition.

The many sharp folds of drapery set up a rich but naturalistic pattern that is quite exciting to the sense of touch, especially by contrast with the smoothness of the exposed portions of the flesh, and help to define the full roundness of the forms beneath so that the structural clarity of the figure is preserved. This clinging quality is so apparent in some fifth-century work that critics have maintained the sculptors must have worked from models draped in wet clothing. The term "wet drapery" is therefore commonly used in describing this style. Combined with the fullness of form, fullness of composition similar to that of the reliefs on the altar of Aphrodite lends further power to this group, especially if the presence of now missing arms and hands is taken into account.



PLATE XXVI. Theseus, from the east pediment of the Parthenon at Athens,
by Pheidias. London, British Museum. Marble; 447-438 B.C.

When a person is said to resemble a Greek god, he might look like this figure, traditionally called Theseus but possibly a river god. Such personifications of geographical environment were a characteristic device of Greek and Roman art to indicate the locality of the scene represented. Facing outward on the left side of the east pediment of the Parthenon, he occupied a position corresponding to that of the reclining figure in the group of the *Fates*. All the more important central figures have been destroyed in the incredible disregard for the safety of outstanding cultural landmarks often shown before modern times. The Parthenon was used as a powder magazine by the Turks during the attack of a Venetian army in 1687, and a shell caused an explosion that blew out the entire central portion of the building. As the admiration of the Renaissance and subsequent classic revivals developed an increasingly scientific attitude toward archaeology, more and more attention was paid to the Greek antecedents of Roman culture. To preserve what was left of the sculpture of the Parthenon at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Lord Elgin took practically all the then remaining pieces to London where they were given a place of honor in the British Museum. As a consequence they are often referred to as the "Elgin marbles."

Attribution of all sculpture from the Parthenon to the authorship of Pheidias is not quite accurate. Records name him as the sculptor in charge of all the sculptural decoration, which included the great bejeweled gold and ivory figure of Athena, which stood the full height of the temple's interior, the two pediments, ninety-two metopes or small reliefs generally of two figures each on the outer frieze, and the great continuous inner frieze of the Panathenaic procession, 525 feet long and over 3 feet high, shown in the next plate. Certainly all this work could hardly have come from the hand of one master, and Pheidias is known to have had the assistance of a considerable workshop. Apparently he carefully supervised the entire design to judge from the uniformity of style throughout, but his precise personal contribution of handiwork or conception cannot be identified in any way.

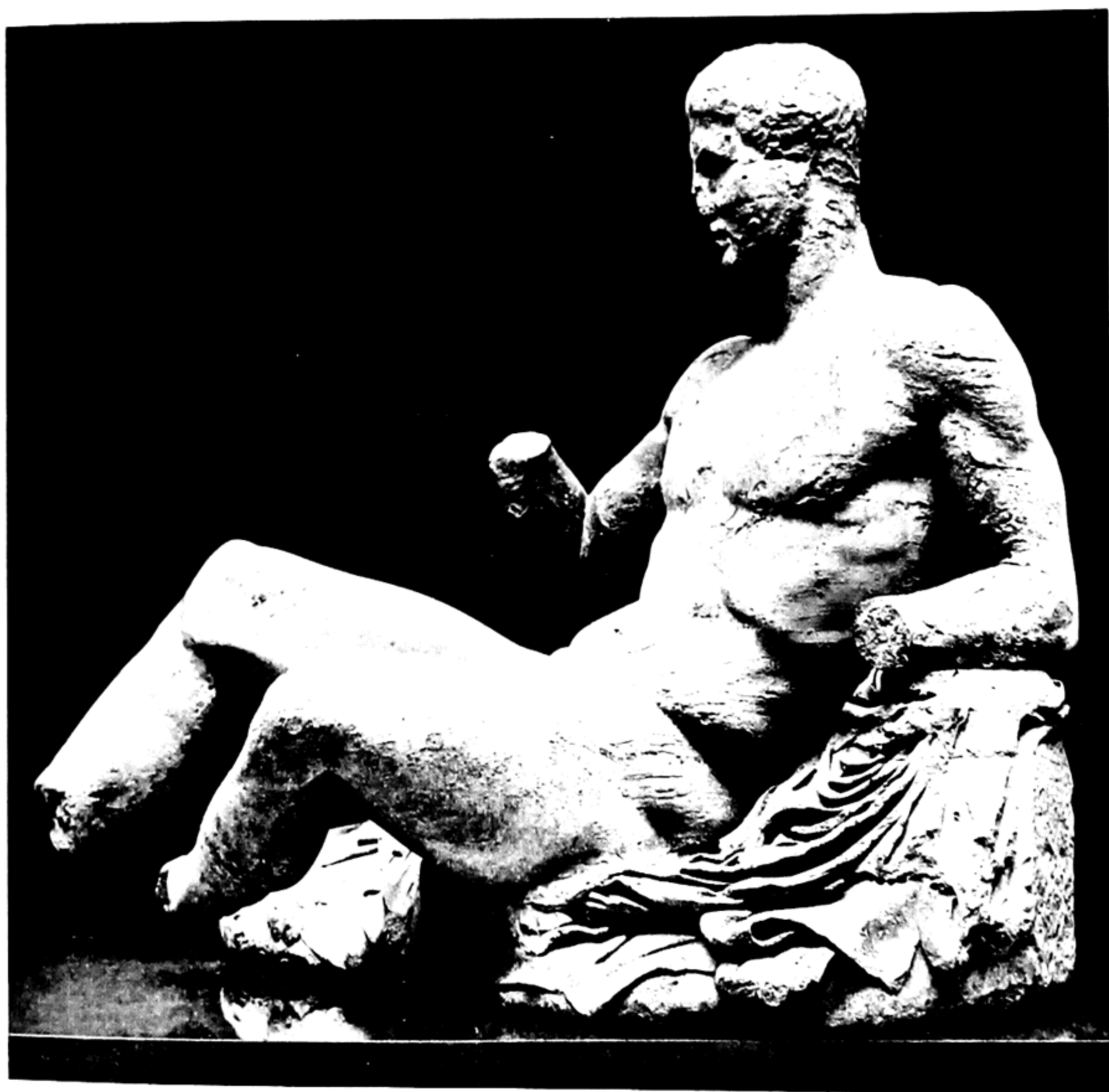


PLATE XXVII. (a) Horsemen, and (b) Horsemen and marshal from the Panathenaic procession of the Parthenon at Athens, by Pheidias. Athens, Acropolis Museum. Marble; 447–438 B.C.

Nothing could express the democracy of Greece more significantly than the Panathenaea. Every four years at the feast of Athena, all the citizens of Athens took part in a great festival including contests of music, poetry, gymnastics, horsemanship, and water sports, and a great procession with representatives of all the Athenian dependencies. The Panathenaic procession is depicted in a frieze that runs around the top of the main wall of the Parthenon inside the colonnade.

In Egypt religion was the function of the priesthood, a mystic practice of elaborate ceremonial performed in the depths of temple sanctuaries. In Greece generally, and in the Panathenaea particularly, however, the temple served simply for the performance of the crucial rite of sacrifice. Various preliminaries were engaged in by all the citizens outside the temple and in other parts of the city, which were of the very fabric of their lives. They witnessed or took part in games and activities that were familiar activities; the power of the Athenian state was expressed in the presence of the tributaries; and her national prominence was implied in the six-day spectacle as a whole for it had consciously been elaborated to rival the time-honored Olympic games.

Little wonder in a country where religion was so much the true possession of the people that government was likewise. Greek democracy, of course, was quite different from what we know by that term today. The unit of government was the city-state, and the demos was a very small portion of the population. Slaves and foreigners (including Greeks whose parents had been born in other cities) could not be citizens. All citizens were qualified to attend the legislative assemblies and from it could be delegated to carry out policies and functions of government. Consequently there was no professionally political group. Before the days of large mercenary armies required for the long and distant campaigns of later Greek history, the citizenry was also responsible for military service. To this fact is sometimes attributed the morale that won the famous victories of ancient Greece.



PLATE XXVIII. Hermes and the infant Dionysos, by Praxiteles. Olympia, Museum. Marble; *ca.* 365 B.C.

Decadence is a word to be used with extreme care because of the fundamentally unpleasant connotation of weakness and doom, where often only a difference in taste is involved. Loosely it has come to suggest a multitude of qualities, among which are softness and charm. These express well the character of this group of Hermes, messenger of the gods, on his way to deliver the god of wine in his infancy to the nymphs who are to bring him up. The subject itself is less severe than the dignified themes of earlier Greek art, and it is to be presumed that with his missing arm Hermes was playfully dangling a bunch of grapes toward which his little charge reaches out. Though still showing the conscious ideal of the human figure, the sculptor no longer presents it as an uncompromisingly measured pattern, but softens the contours of the muscles with an ingratiating apparent lack of precision.

History provides some basis for the supposition of decadence and demoralization in fourth-century Greece. Athenian power had been broken in the Peloponnesian War, and none of her rivals had been able to set up an equal hegemony in her place. Expensive wars, decline in revenues from trade and tribute, and marked decrease in population caused increasing hardship to the city-states. The philosophers were concerned with solutions to the obviously critical state of the nation and ideal republics were conceived by Plato and Aristotle to no avail. Philip of Macedon and his great son Alexander conquered Greece in 338 B.C., and it was perhaps fortunate that the weakened and disunited city-states fell before a kindred people with such a high regard for Greek culture as the invaders had.



PLATE XXIX. Nike of Samothrace. Paris, Louvre. Marble; 305 B.C. (Hellenistic).

The flowing lines of the figure popularly known as the *Winged Victory* (Nike, pronounced *nee kay*, was the Greek goddess of victory) bespeak a culture no longer expressing a tight little city-state, a tight little peninsula, nor the clear logical patterns of conduct evolved by the thinkers of Greece. Alexander conquered an empire from the Danube to the north of India, and though it no longer remained united politically after his youthful death in 323 B.C., the cultural consequences of his promotion of Greek ideas persisted. Cities far surpassing Athens in wealth and size, Rhodes, Ephesus, Pergamon, and others, developed throughout Asia Minor under the stimulus which world trade received from the enlightened political and commercial organization set up by the young Macedonian. Greek in its naturalism and idealized glorification of Man, the new "Hellenistic" art was richer and more adventurous both in subject matter and technical development. Some attribute the new intensity and color to the influence of the luxurious taste of Eastern art, but it may be due, too, to the new sense of expansion and activity in the world. For though Greece had operated politically and commercially over a far-flung area, the citizens of the larger city-states appear to have felt a constricted superiority in cultural matters, sometimes today attributed to the so-called "Brahmins" of Boston and other precious circles.

Not only do the lines of this figure radiate with a sense of unbounded vigor (even more strikingly when it was complete with one outstretched arm holding a wreath of victory, the other a spar as trophy from a defeated vessel) but the open feeling of the composition is furthered by the indication of a specific environment. The base on which the figure stands represents a fighting ship, for it commemorates the naval victory of the Greeks over Egyptian forces at Salamis on the Island of Cyprus, and some can see the pose of the figure braced against its windswept movement through the waves.



PLATE XXX. Boy and goose, by Boethus. Munich, Glyptothek. Marble;
ca. 150 B.C. (Hellenistic).

All of life became the subject of art in the Hellenistic age. No longer confined as in Greece to an ideal concern with the representation of gods and heroes, sculpture begins to include subjects that are quaint, brutal, picturesque, immediate, and mundane. This charming moment of childhood, old fishermen and marketwomen, slaves, battered gladiators, and fallen warriors, a whole gamut of new subjects was invented completely outside the strict limitations of earlier Greek sculpture. Perhaps an interest in such informality was already beginning in the playful conception of such a work as the *Hermes* of Praxiteles (Plate XXVIII) but he was still a god.

Doubtless an important reason for the change in attitude toward subject matter was the fact that more and more in the Hellenistic period sculpture served the patronage of wealthy individuals. In Greece it had been exclusively a civic concern. The works were ordered by or presented to the state and displayed in public places, principally the acropolis and its approaches. Naturally, therefore, they were not only generalized expressions of the people as a whole, but necessarily lofty and inspiring, for the acropolis with its altars and temples was also the precinct of the gods. The intimate free-standing figures of the Hellenistic period, that is to say those that were not architectural decoration nor great monumental works, were intended mostly for the decoration of the halls or courtyards and gardens of some wealthy merchant's or official's estate. Thus the taste of many separate individuals was brought to bear on cultural expression, and we see in the Hellenistic period the development of Western individualism to a degree foreshadowing that of Renaissance and modern times. Then, too, art was produced in many widely scattered communities whose varying social histories and background developed various attitudes toward cultural expression.



PLATE XXXI. Slave sharpening knife (L'Arrotino). Florence, Uffizi.
Marble; Hellenistic period.

Not only would the slave as such have been deemed inconsequential and unworthy as a subject for sculptural representation in Greece, but the remarkable expression of servility here achieved in the face and posture would have been completely beyond the capacity of a Greek sculptor. He would not have been at a loss in respect to any technical limitations, but simply because his imagination received no training or experience in the suggestion of personal emotions. Slavery, to be sure, was a familiar element in the society of the ancient world. In Greece it may have resulted from the early subjection of the native population to the overlordship of the conquering Dorians. However, there was apparently no racial distinction in historical times between free and slave classes, except insofar as the ranks of slavery were constantly expanded by captives taken in foreign wars. Unlike their position in recent American history, slaves in Greece were not primarily agricultural workers nor personal servants but were employed for the most part in what was then large-scale industry, and they included most of the skilled craftsmen of the time. Thus the sculptor's conception of this character clearly includes a sense of skill and familiarity in the handling of the tool.

Another characteristic of Hellenistic sculpture appears in the naturalistic treatment of anatomy in this figure. No longer a clear, idealized pattern, the muscles are presented in much greater detail than appears in the fifth- or fourth-century Greek sculpture, and without the sense of almost geometrical arrangement in the earlier work. This was made possible by the advances in scientific knowledge that took place during the Hellenistic period, especially at Alexandria, the great center of learning in the Egyptian delta, where anatomy was studied by actual dissection of human corpses as in modern times.

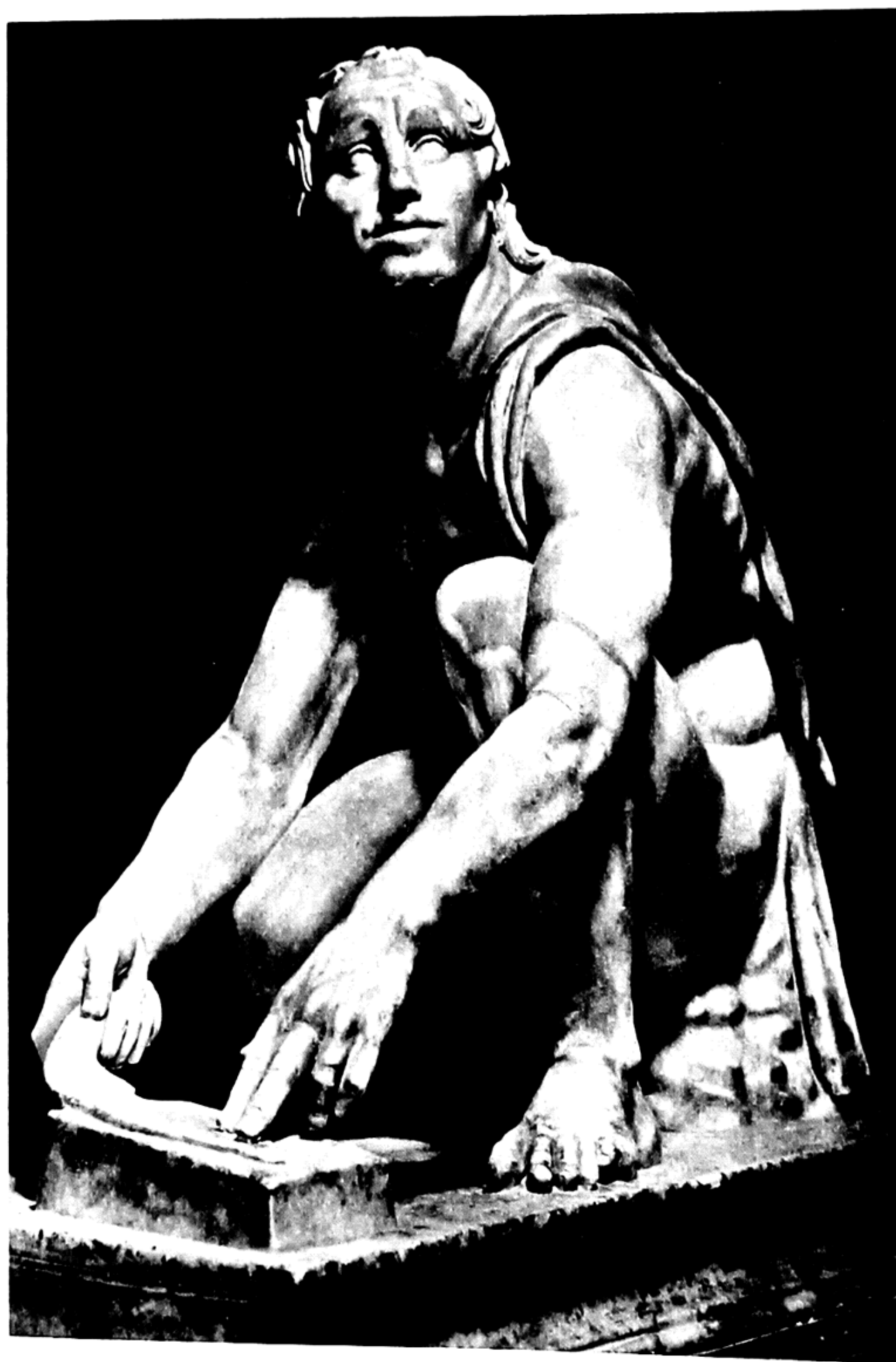


PLATE XXXII. Great altar of Zeus from Pergamon. Berlin, Pergamon Museum. Marble; 180 B.C. (Hellenistic).

This part of the great outdoor sacrificial altar, referred to as "satan's throne" in Revelations 2: 13, bears a writhing mass of gods and giants fighting for supremacy, who show nothing of the purity and serenity of Greek art. The giants are fantastic creatures whose legs are serpents weaving about in struggle with animals that are cult symbols of the gods. Both of these features are typical "eastern" modifications of earlier Greek religion, which followed upon the cosmopolitan complications of culture in the Hellenistic period. Unlike the *Götterdämmerung* of northern mythology, in which the mystic powers of Nature are represented as giants infinitely superior to mankind and even to its gods, the Greek gods emerge victorious from this combat. The subject symbolized Pergamon's triumph over the troublesome barbaric Galatians, which the altar was erected to celebrate.

Pergamon was one of the important new cities that grew up in Asia Minor during the Hellenistic period. It was not one of those cities which prospered directly as the result of the conquests of Alexander the Great, although the entire region was indebted to him for his destruction of the oppressive Persian overlordship. The success of Pergamon, which came later, was due primarily to the perspicacity of its rulers. Sensing the rising importance of Rome, the Pergamene kings cultivated friendly relations at an early stage and prospered in the growth of Roman imperial power, becoming the rich capital of most of western Asia Minor and thus one of the great cities of the Hellenistic period.

Considerably larger than life size figures form the continuous band of sculpture that runs around this large, rather complex architectural structure. The heavy shadows cast by the undercutting of the deeply modeled figures and by sharply incising the complex anatomical detail, contribute an effect of contrasting light and shade to this work which is sometimes referred to as eastern "colorism," and the style may be said to be "less sculptural" on the whole than earlier Greek work.



PLATE XXXIII. Etruscan warrior. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.
terra cotta; *ca.* 500 B.C.

War was a constant recourse in the interminable squabbles among the comparatively small communities of the ancient world. Since it consisted virtually of coordinated personal combat, military prowess was an important quality in the individual of classic times and frequently celebrated in art. Nowhere is it done more forcefully, however, than in this simple and direct expression of sheer physical power in hand-to-hand encounter. There is also a definite note of self-confident human contentiousness, which may account for much of the difficulty in arriving at satisfactory political adjustments among the communities of the ancient world. Today such an unqualified egotism seems a trifle naïve, if for no other reason than the development of homicide as a mass production industry in modern warfare.

Etruria was a loosely confederated group of city-states in the northwestern portion of the Italian peninsula, corresponding roughly to what is known as Tuscany and Umbria in modern Italy, the region of Florence and the hill towns. Settled about the time of the Dorian invasions by emigrants from Asia Minor, with an eastern culture derived from Assyria and Egypt, Etruria had a culture distinct from that of Greece but came more and more under Hellenic influence especially in art. This figure for example is distinctly in the style of late archaic Greek sculpture. Although many distinctly Etruscan and other local features survive in the culture of Rome, the proportion of Greek influence predominates.

Considerable technical skill is required for the firing of so large a figure in terra cotta, unusual even today, as it is somewhat over life-size. The surface coloring in this medium is fused into the material itself by the process of firing, which explains why the designs have remained in relatively good condition. The fine, rather active lines of the patterned decoration contribute an enriching sense of contrast with the highly simplified masses, and the large eyes give a peculiar animation to the face.



PLATE XXXIV. (a) Portrait of a Roman. Marble; Republican period, *ca.* 50 B.C. (b) Portrait of the Emperor Caracalla (A.D. 186–217). Marble; *ca.* A.D. 215. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Roman sculptors carried the skill of creating individual human likeness to a point never before achieved and rarely equaled since. The society of Greece was to some extent individualistic and the notion of portraiture existed, but the few that were attempted before the Hellenistic period were so idealized as to be largely symbolical rather than realistic. Even in Hellenistic portraiture a great deal of the conventional Greek formulation persisted. Although Roman art was thoroughly dependent on Greek in many ways, so much that it might even be considered a western Hellenistic school, it developed independently the objective and the skill of creating a literal, speaking likeness with a sense of particular human personality.

The name of this elderly Roman who lived shortly before the birth of Christ is unknown now but from this bit of marble he is seen to be a thoughtful person, calculating his course carefully in a world where each man is primarily concerned with his own lot. Sorrow has been his portion to some degree, and he knows he must be wary lest his neighbor snatch away his present good fortune. But he still has the spirit to fend against all comers, though he begins to realize, perhaps with some slight confusion, that an Opponent approaches against Whom his strong will can be of no avail.

The brutal and arrogant rapacity of the fratricidal despot, Caracalla, is summed up in the tense impatient brow and peremptory mouth so vividly presented by the Roman sculptor. Having killed his brother to secure full possession of the throne to which they had succeeded jointly after their father's death in Britain in 211, he massacred 20,000 of his brother's followers. Four years later he ordered a general massacre at Alexandria, cultural center of Egypt and the ancient world, in revenge for an insult. Dying by violence at the age of thirty-one, the victim of a plot by one of his officers to replace him, he had reigned only six years. During that time his extravagance and that of his army was a constant burden on the Roman treasury. Doubtless to appease the heavily taxed citizenry of Rome, he built one of the great public baths in A.D. 217, a lofty, vaulted, and luxuriously decorated structure, remains of which still give evidence of its great scale and extent.



PLATE XXXV. Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121–180) receiving conquered barbarians. Rome, Palazzo dei Conservatori. Marble; *ca.* A.D. 170.

A marked characteristic of Roman relief sculpture, as distinct from that of Greece, was the tendency toward spatial representation. Although the human figures are still most prominent, practically filling the foreground, they are arranged so as to imply recession of the composition into deep space. Here this is indicated clearly by the considerable overlapping of figures, four or five ranges of men or horses being carefully built up throughout in depths of relief according to their relative positions in space, and a further extension of space beyond is suggested by the banners and trees. Despite a certain almost mechanical evenness of texture, the forms are full, the composition richly compact and effective in conveying the intended narrative.

The unexcited quality of completeness, balance, and clear accomplishment of a well-recognized purpose shown in this work coincides with the intelligent competence and humane personality of the last and best of the “philosopher emperors,” Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who ruled from 161 to his death in A.D. 180. As indicated in his *Meditations*, written in the midst of activity throughout his life, he was a liberal, practical Stoic, seeking not happiness but equanimity, which he felt could be achieved by cultivation of the four chief virtues; wisdom, justice, temperance or moderation, and fortitude—the enduring of labor and pain.

The imperial system in Rome was brought to its highest point during the so-called Antonine empire culminating in the rule of Marcus Aurelius, with efficient administration by trained civil servants recruited and promoted according to their abilities; trade restrictions and customs were simplified and measures taken to encourage industry and agriculture; resources of the empire were intelligently conserved, and the benefits of Roman culture were extended to the provinces. Nevertheless signs of decay began to appear internally, and at the same time Marcus Aurelius was required to devote much of his reign to defending the borders of the empire from the attacks of barbarians, defeating the Parthians in Syria and the Marcomanni and Quadi in Germany, who may be represented in this relief. He died in the field during a later campaign on the German frontier, and from that time until its collapse the Roman Empire never ceased to be on the defensive.



ROMANESQUE

HEAVEN ON EARTH

NUMBERS have a great power over human imagination. In the Middle Ages the number 1000 must have seemed a big number, 1000 years a long time, and many people believed that the year 1000 would see the second coming of Christ with the establishment of paradise on earth. In preparation for this event they gave or bequeathed all of their worldly goods to the Church, and on the night of December 31, 999, many went up on mountain tops dressed in sackcloth or burial shrouds to witness the coming of glory. Indeed, one still speaks of the millenium as some distant period in which everything will be perfect. How many people were affected by this belief, and whether or not their disappointment took the form of a greater interest in their material welfare from that time on, less in the promised life to come, it is very difficult to say. But certain it is that things began to happen in western Europe early in the second millenium of the Christian Era, which resulted in great material enrichment of life. An enormous release of human energy stimulated widespread economic and political development and was expressed culturally in great programs of monumental construction. Activity in all the arts from that time on became more consistent than it had been in the past, both in quantity and in quality.

The stimulus may also have been due to opportunities offered by the growth of the market, or this economic development may itself have been an expression of the revival of interest in material well-being. In any case the cultural changes of Europe and of the world for many centuries can be related closely to this new emphasis on the exchange of goods. In the feudal manor there had been weekly gatherings of serfs for the exchange of their meager surpluses, but only local produce was involved, and in no way was the rigid economy of local consumption upset. But when this function of exchange was placed on a broader basis by the establishment of markets and fairs in the growing towns, when professional merchants brought goods from far and wide and there was a real incentive to the production of surpluses for sale, the face of life changed physically and spiritually. Roads were built to facilitate movement of goods from town to town. Towns grew and became far more important centers of activity than the manors. Wealthy citizens of the towns, whose power rested on manufacture and exchange of goods rather than inherited rights, became as important as the feudal

nobility. Money became as much a power as land. All these things and many consequences began to happen in the Romanesque period, though of course their consummation was not immediate.

Feudal Christianity taught men that the material fortunes of this world, a mere threshold to eternity, were of no account; and this was a satisfactory belief for the great majority who dwelt as serfs in a world that offered no opportunity to escape a rather miserable and burdensome lot. In the days after the Roman Empire collapsed under the weight of its own inner decay and pressure from the northern barbarians, the life of the isolated, individual tiller of the soil had been as precarious as that of a rabbit that could not run or a bird that could not fly. He and his produce were constantly at the mercy of sections of the migrating tribes no longer held in check by the threat of imperial retaliation, and of small military bands from the outposts of the disorganized empire, who themselves had previously been responsible for maintaining order. Banding together for protection under some local individual capable of personal and military leadership, it had not seemed disproportionate for the harried tillers of the soil to bind over to him a great portion of their lives in view of the fact that he and the community that he kept in being were the only guarantee they had of survival at all in a period when violence prevailed. When the direst need abated, some of the conditions seemed heavy, and some of the feudal lords abused the virtually absolute power they inherited.

The serf in western Europe was no inconsiderable, substandard fringe. He was almost everybody and responsible for the original production of practically everything, since the land was the source of all wealth and he worked the land; but he had very little left for himself. He had to work two or three days a week on his lord's "demesne" and give him a varying number of additional days at sowing and harvest time, as well as for military emergencies and other occasions throughout the year. He had to pay a portion of his produce to use communal equipment such as the mill or the wine press. Personal affairs were conducted by the consent and with the adjudication of the lord. No serf nor his descendants could leave the land to which they were bound. Freedom or partial freedom from serfdom did not mean a great change—a reduction in the obligations to the lord, a few ceremonial privileges. The chances of drastic amelioration of one's fortunes were virtually nil, and the material circumstances of a serf's life were meager.

No wonder then at the belief that one did not live for his fortune in this life but in the life to come; that the promise of mystic salvation in Christianity became the guiding spirit and expression of the times; and that little or no effort was expended during the early Middle Ages in attempts to alter or improve one's circumstances in this world. Until the Romanesque period and the growth of the market, the culture of western Europe was thus essentially static. Strong individuals arose in various

places to weld a region for a time into a broader, more efficient, more wealthy unit, but nothing basic or permanent was accomplished. The seat of the dynasty might give rise to a brief flowering of a particular school of culture. One of the most noted and powerful of such developments was the empire of Charlemagne, which lasted from 800 to 987, with its distinct so-called "Carolingian" culture, strictly a matter of the court and a few leading monasteries.

Sometimes these early medieval schools are included in the term "Romanesque" when it is understood to designate the entire period in western Europe from the fall of Rome in 471 to the Gothic period beginning about 1200. Here the term "Romanesque" is confined to the early period of cultural revival which seems to begin about A.D. 1000 and leads into the more completely humanistic culture of the Gothic period and the Renaissance. Its influence extended to the west through Spain, northward through Britain and Ireland, and included Germany on the east and the north of Italy to the south. Most of Italy remained dependent on the art of Byzantium (Constantinople) singularly devoid of sculptural production, until the capture of the eastern capital of Christianity by the Turks and the beginning of Italy's independent culture in the Renaissance.

The cultural changes implied and brought about by the growth of the market were not immediately realized. The arts of the Romanesque period are primarily a glorification of the older, more highly formalized aspect of Christianity. Only the great energy suddenly expressed both in the amount of work produced and in the active, enthusiastic quality of the styles developed gives a clue to the profound changes taking place. The old subjects are used, old styles of representation are the basis of Romanesque work. Here and there, however, in the spontaneous selection of a new subject, in an imaginative twist to an old one, is seen dawning a realization of the new meaning of life. Thus creative expression gives us a true picture of the gradual unfolding of a revolutionary change in the manner of living, as it was actually felt by those whose acts from day to day created its course.

At first the process was virtually one of putting new wine into old bottles. People first expressed the new zest for life by glorifying the religion that they knew, of aspiration to the splendor of the hereafter. Every town of any size built one or more stone-vaulted churches made as brilliant as possible as a sample of heavenly glory. Great advances in the techniques of building in stone may be due in part to the influx of Syrian and Byzantine craftsmen being pushed out of Asia Minor by the advance of the Turks, where they had kept alive and developed techniques of vault construction from classic times. Sculpture was lavishly employed in many of these buildings, especially around the entrances, and in its development can be seen the progress of the expanding interest and ingenuity of the newly directed culture almost as if it were being examined under a microscope or in a slow-motion film.

PLATE XXXVI. Reliefs from St. Bernward's door. Bronze; 1007–1015.

Cathedral, Hildesheim. (a) Creation of Eve. (b) *Noli me tangere*. (c) Three Marys at the tomb.

When Otto I, king of Germany, decided to make something more than a name of his feudal overlordship, he brought the princes of his own realm into line by his vigorous military and organizational activity and, cultivating the friendship of the Church, conquered Italy and was made first Holy Roman Emperor by the Pope in 962. One of the important towns of Otto's German domain was Hildesheim, made an episcopal seat by Charlemagne in 822. At the beginning of the Romanesque period it was ruled by the prince bishop Bernward (993–1022) who had been the tutor of the infant king Otto III, grandson of Otto the Great. Like Charlemagne, the Ottos encouraged cultural development, but the culture of the so-called "Ottonian" school was less under the leadership of the court than in Charlemagne's time, more the province of abbots and bishops. Bernward took civic and cultural responsibilities to himself with a vigor that earned him a sainted memory. He is most noted for having caused the town to be walled and for encouraging the development of metal crafts.

St. Bernward's bronze doors in the Cathedral at Hildesheim are one of the great monuments of early Romanesque art in the Ottonian style. Approximately twenty feet in height and about eight feet across, each half was divided from top to bottom into a series of eight panels, those on the left representing scenes of the creation and original sin, those on the right the life of Christ. The types of figure used, the roomy open spacing of the composition, and stylistic details of natural and architectural setting are reminiscent of manuscript illumination, one of the most active forms of artistic production in the early Middle Ages. An interesting symbolical device, characteristic of medieval practice in pictorial narrative, is seen in the *Noli me tangere*, or Christ appearing to the Magdalen. He arose on the third day, which is shown by the three cocks crowing with increasing fervor.

Nowhere is the futility of words to describe the essential plastic meaning of sculpture more apparent than in trying to use them to interpret this work, so fine yet so different from familiar present standards. I would say that the simple, emphatic, and unadorned sense of being with which the unknown sculptor or sculptors have endowed the actors of their themes, expresses in a charming and arresting way their medieval belief in the literal truth and final importance of the scriptural narrative.

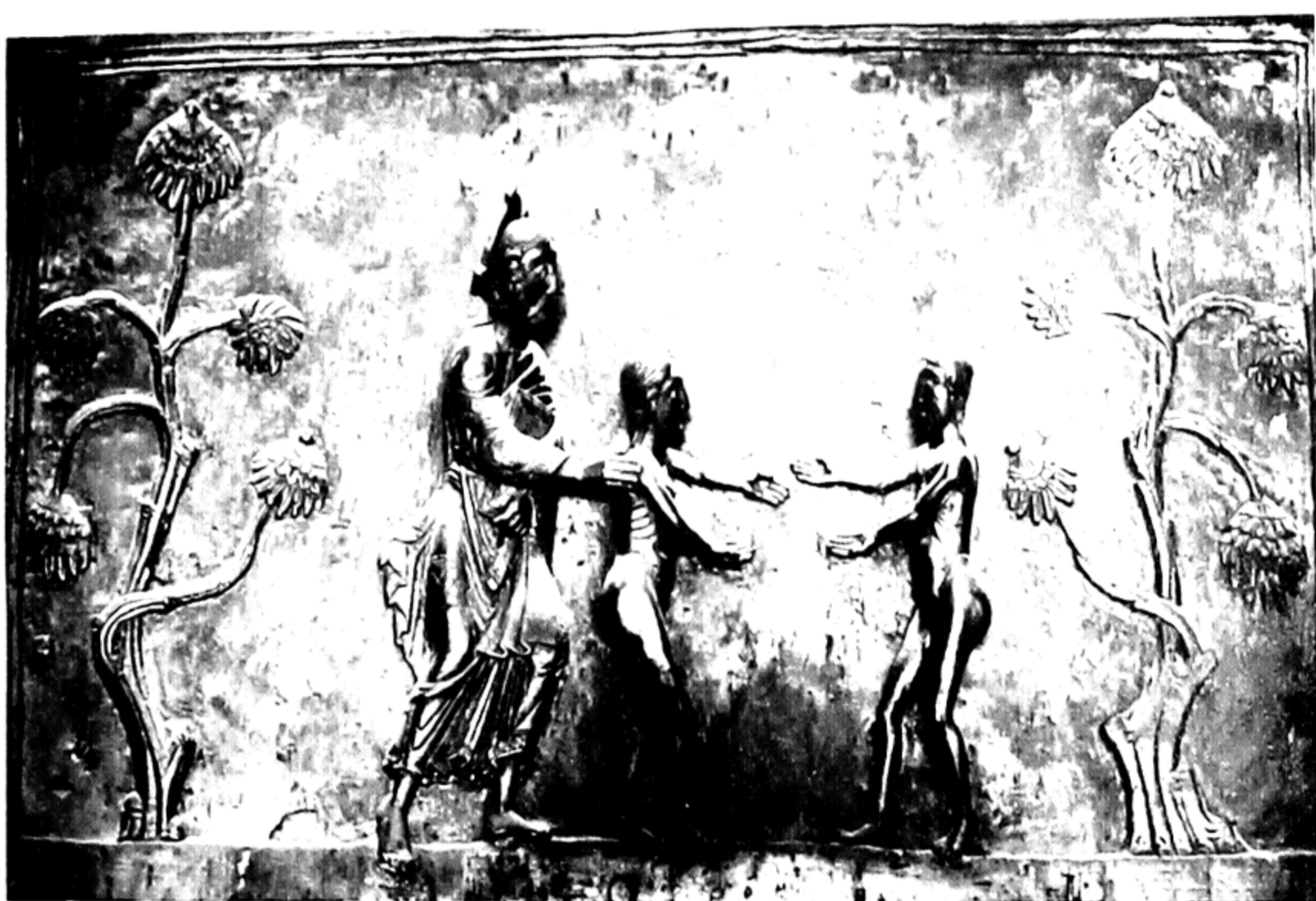


PLATE XXXVII. Vision of the Apocalypse. Tympanum, Church of St. Pierre, Moissac. *ca.* 1135.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast," said Alexander Pope, but his famous couplet is actually no more than the faintest hint of the great power of spiritual regeneration exercised by the long history of apocalyptic literature, the revelations of both Hebrew and Christian seers. Generation after generation of men struggling in misery and oppression have rallied to new visions of fulfillment of the scriptural promise that the faithful shall inherit the kingdom of Heaven.

In the Romanesque period the Revelation of St. John the Divine, last book of the New Testament, became of paramount interest to the people for its fancied reference to the millennium when he says, ". . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Rev. 20: 4, 5). Apocalyptic explanations of the sufferings of the faithful have characteristically arisen in periods when their hardships have persisted through many generations and their subjection seems too abysmal for escape. The standard of living of the serfs in the so-called Dark Ages was practically at animal level, and the feudal overlordship bore down increasingly in the absolute and arbitrary domination of complete military power. Thus the earnest vision of the world's destruction that "I, your brother John" beheld atop the mountain on the isle of Patmos, though originally it was preached to the twelve Greek cities of Asia Minor toward the end of the first century A.D., seemed clearly to the medieval toilers to apply to their own immediate and unhappy situation.

In creating the earthly sample of paradise that was the Church of St. Pierre at Moissac, the sculptor decorated it with this apocalyptic reference to the imminence of God's kingdom on earth. For John saw Christ enthroned in glory, surrounded by the four symbols of the Evangelists, ". . . and round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, . . . and they had on their heads crowns of gold" (Rev. 4: 4). In their hands are the "harps" and vials of incense "which are the prayers of saints" (5: 8).

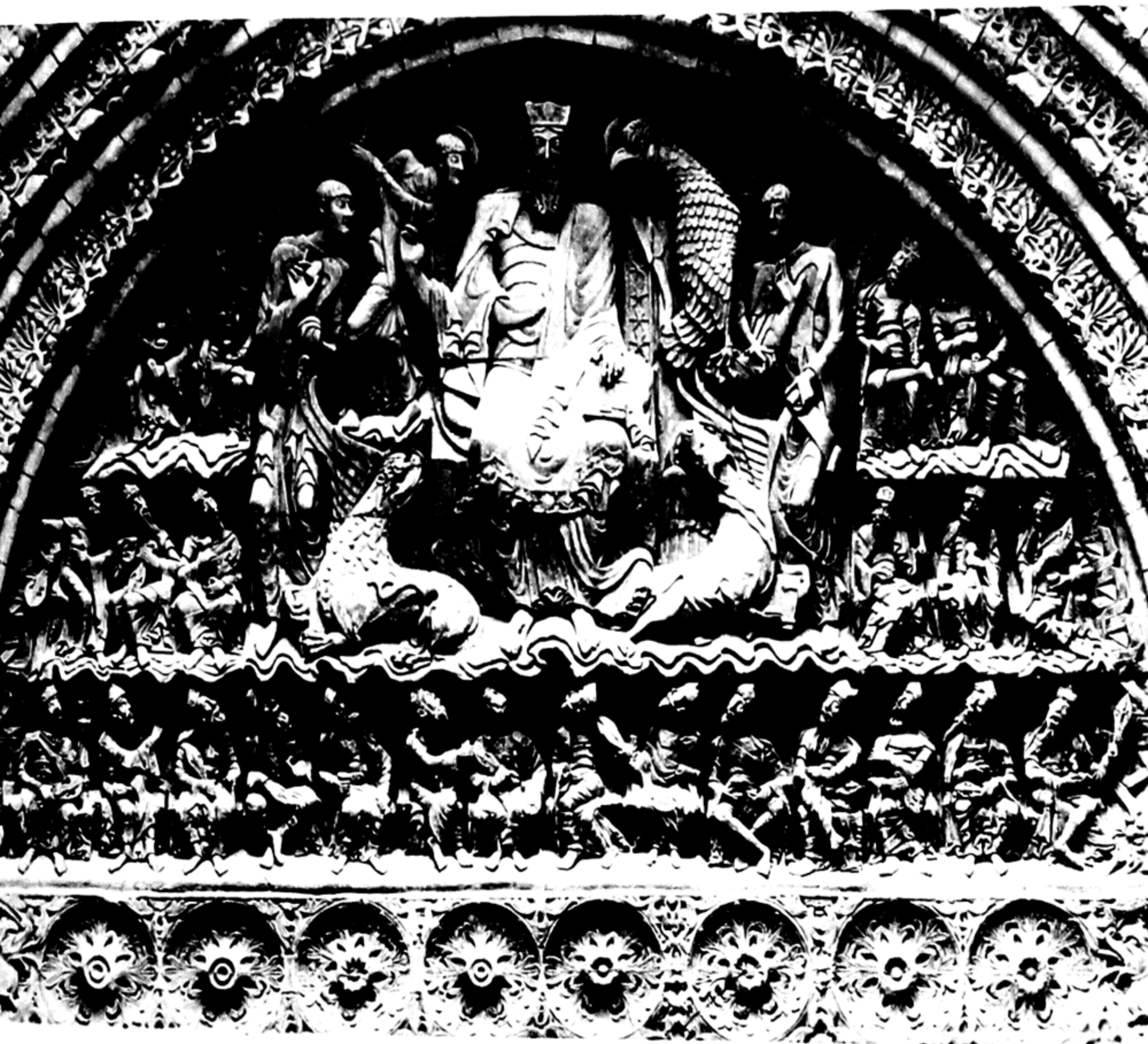


PLATE XXXVIII. Elders. Detail, tympanum, Church of St. Pierre, Moissac.
ca. 1135.

The Book of Revelations stands for all to read in the earnest and personal words of an early Christian visionary. Its mysteries and figurative allusions have been traced and explained after a fashion by many scholars. Obvious historical and sociological references suggest its bearing upon the lives of the people in southwestern France and on European life generally. What additional service does this sculptural portal render toward an understanding of its human environment?

Only by seeing this as a human creation, a struggle by a human personality to materialize a feeling about the broader aspects of his life, its significance, its relation to the eternal order of things, can its full meaning be reached. Literally pictorializing the fantastic vision of St. John, the generous and unquestioning faith of a brave soul monumentalizes the Word which has been given him under circumstances which he has no means or reason to question. The animation in the pose of each of the elders, his eyes concentrated on the figure of Christ who holds the book of the seven terrible seals on His knee, the restless intensity with which the whole space of the composition is developed even in the fluttering edge of the heavenly clouds, bespeaks in terms more compelling than any words the power of the hope that was bursting from the hearts of the faithful. Whether as cause or effect, such zeal accompanied the creation of the new world of opportunity in the richly laden markets, and bears witness of the stimulation their promise gave to human effort.

One can experience something of the same intense fervor by letting his eye follow the gesture of the forms the artist's enthusiasm has created, for in so doing muscular tendencies are set up empathically in his own body and enkindle like emotions. The elder swinging his harp in the lower left-hand corner makes one feel almost physically excited about the central promise of glory as does a Bach religious cantata, or the less formalized hopefulness of youth expressed in modern swing music.



PLATE XXXIX. Prophets. Trumeau. Church of St. Pierre, Moissac. *ca.* 1135.

Much of the great sculpture of the Romanesque period was developed as architectural decoration. The church portal was the concentration point and was often decorated with great compositions, as at Moissac. This *trumeau*, a central support used in the middle of a particularly wide doorway, shows how intimately the sculptured decoration became a part of the architectural member to which it was applied, often completely obscuring or substituting for it. Modern academic architects frown on such use of decoration as unsympathetic to the arbitrarily accepted classical norm, but it is done precisely to express an ecstasy beyond the range of the logical calculation expressed by classical art.

Artistic production expended its greatest efforts in the Romanesque period on ecclesiastical architecture and its sculptured decoration. Great monasteries and churches were built to draw in the masses of the people with the revived promise of salvation and eternal glory, and the tremendous physical labor of their production involved the participation of whole communities over considerable periods of time. Previous to this great release of energy, cultural production in western Europe outside the Mediterranean area had centered largely in the creation of illuminated manuscripts. These great and elegant glorifications of the Word of God were the work of a single individual or a small group working in the seclusion of a monastery. Only in a few wealthy and inspired institutions could the necessary labor be released for such purposes, and the product was known only to a handful of leading clerics and noble patrons. Thus the shift in emphasis from the precious manuscript to the community of expression in architecture, which coincides with the beginning of the Romanesque period, denotes a great revival in popular culture. Manuscripts continued to be made for individuals until the invention of mechanical printing came about as the result of the missionary needs of the Reformation. In a sense this marked the culmination of the revival of popular participation in cultural expression begun in the sculpturally decorated architectural masterpieces of the Romanesque period.



PLATE XL. Portal. Church of La Madeleine, Vezelay. 1132–1140.

Dwellings at the beginning of the Romanesque period, except those of most nobles and some churchmen, were one-room structures just high enough to stand up in, of sod, field stones, and thatch, or of “wattle and daub,” which was interwoven sticks smeared with mud. By contrast, the lofty, colorful, and luminous interior of such a church as this must have appeared truly as a sample and a promise of earthly paradise. In the sculptured portal the majestic figure of Christ offered a welcome, and with his heavenly associates constituted a direct and personal guarantee of the truth and power of His Word.

Here the promise of His divine mercy is shown in the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles on the Feast of Pentecost, quite simply by the lines radiating from His hands. In the second chapter of the Acts it is told how then they became miraculously able to speak in the tongues of “every nation under heaven,” whose peoples are represented by the strange creatures in the boxlike compartments above the Apostles. A prophecy of the world’s doom and salvation for the faithful, which occurs in the same chapter, is here illustrated by the procession of souls coming to Judgment, represented in the small figures carved on the lintel, which is the horizontal member spanning the doorway and supported by the *trumeau*.

This is perhaps the finest of the great Romanesque portals. Its expressive composition is both rich and subtle. Note how the design of a beautifully proportioned cross draws the various elements together. Its base is the *trumeau*. The horizontal arms are the two halves of the lintel, and the figure of Christ forms the upper arm, skillfully set off in the space left between the two rows of boxes under the arch of the doorway. The figure of John the Baptist holding the image (destroyed) of the Lamb of God in a round nimbus at the center of the composition is echoed in the two pairs of figures on the posts at either side of the doorway, which are made slightly smaller to give emphasis to the central figure. The manner in which the latter breaks the lintel increases the authority of the less clearly marked vertical of the cross, and the figure itself, with the horizontal capital crossing behind it just below the shoulders suggests a small cross intensifying the pattern of the larger one.

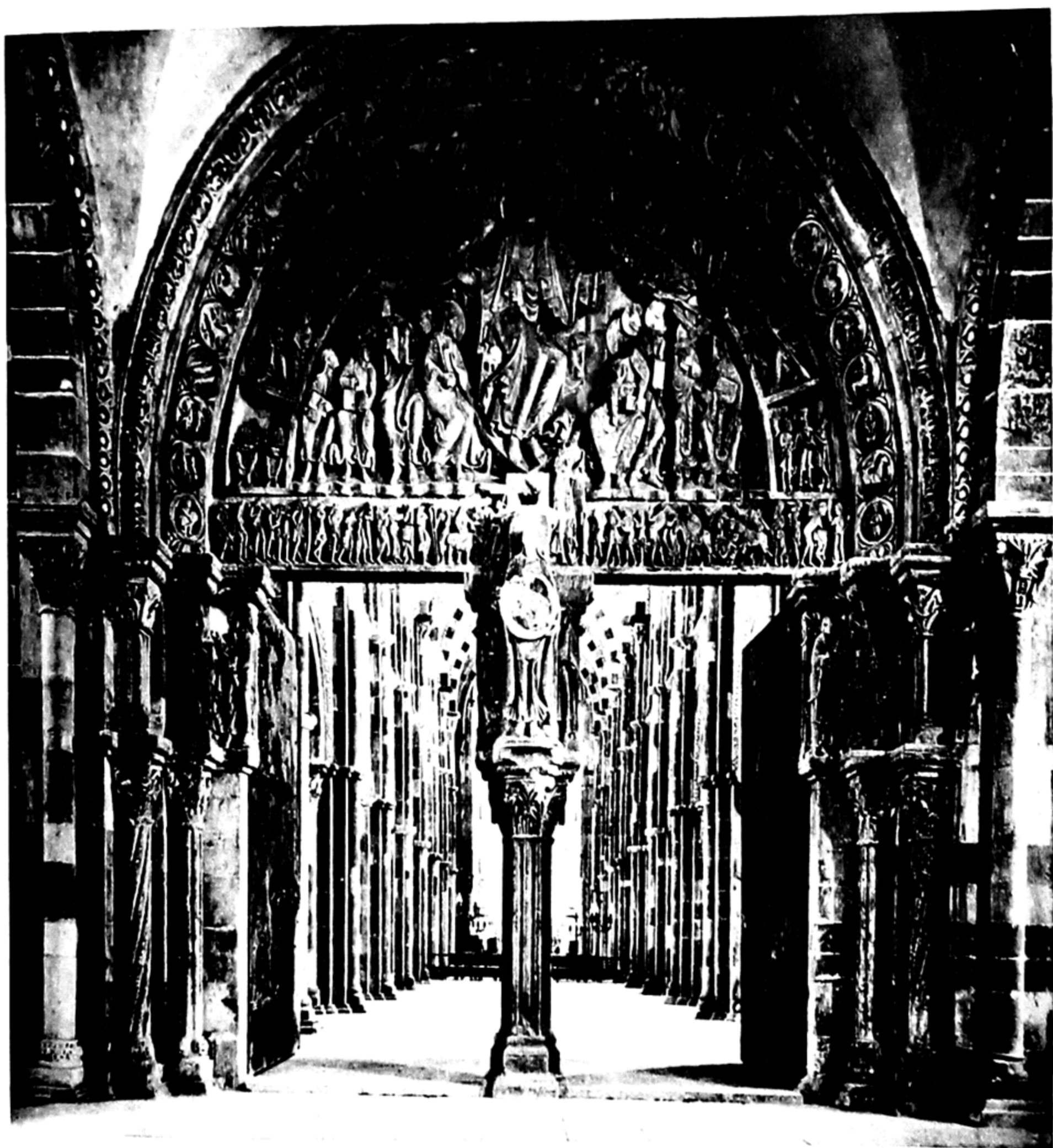


PLATE XLI. Apostles. Detail of tympanum, portal. Church of La Madeleine,
Vézelay. 1132-1140.

Follow with your eye the dancing line made by the lower edge of the garments of the Apostles; move up into the composition along their linear shins; and swing into the spinning whorls of capes and sleeves. This flowing pattern of the fine lines of drapery and the active, angular composition of highly elongated limbs result in a sense of intensely energetic life. Originally this must have been considerably enhanced by the facial expressions of the now missing heads destroyed in some attempted iconoclastic reform or the twelfth-century struggles in which the townspeople abetted by the local counts strove for political independence from the Benedictine monastery. Similar animation appears in the small figures beneath their feet of the souls called to Judgment. The variety of types employed is a distinct index of the growing interest in the nature of life on earth.

Early Christianity had become more and more absolute and formalized during the first few centuries of its existence. All emphasis was placed on the glory of the life to come, and the only significance attached to earthly passage from one eternity to another lay in the performance of the seven sacraments of the Church. To be sure, little or no possibility existed for the alteration of the pattern of one's life from one generation to the next, or from the fixed round of necessary service imposed on virtually everyone by his feudal vassalage. The formalized, mystical character of religion and the consequent lack of concern with literal representation of actual life in art were true expressions of the social philosophy one was forced by circumstances to adopt.

Recovery from the abysmal level of social disorganization after the fall of the Roman Empire began in a burst of hopeful enthusiasm first expressed in figurative terms of heavenly salvation which were familiar. But as the growth of markets and towns provided opportunity and as the standard of living of great sections of the population crept upward in some instances and greatly improved in others, the character of one's immediate earthly existence held more and more significance. Only the beginnings of this are seen in Romanesque art, quite often in these scenes of the souls come to Judgment on the lintels of the church portals. In this instance a definite attempt seems to have been made to indicate the earthly occupations of the various individuals.



PLATE XLII. Angel. Detail of tympanum, portal. Cathedral of St. Lazare,
Autun. 1120-1178.

More concerned with visualizing the actual process of Judgment, less beautifully composed than the portal at Vézelay, the Judgment portal of the Cathedral of St. Lazare at Autun shows the most extreme figure style developed in the Romanesque period in respect to the manner in which the limbs are elongated. This device is often employed in a dynamic style of expression, partly because of the implication of a force that produces the abnormal attenuation of the figures, as though stretched like a rubber band, and also because of the movement added to the composition as the eye tends to follow the direction of the narrow forms. Much less extreme but definitely noticeable, the same characteristic appeared in the Vézelay portal previously examined, which is a comparatively short distance from Autun. In varying degrees it appears throughout "northern" art of this time, that is to say, work created outside the classicistic influence of the Mediterranean cultural area.

The wealth and charm of imagination in the newly inspired sculptors of this period are amusingly shown in the tiny figure of a soul peering apprehensively from beneath the skirts of an angel of Judgment. The vast difference in relative proportion indicates another aspect of the symbolical formalization practiced in the early medieval styles. Size indicates relative importance, the figure of Christ always being considerably larger than any other (except in strictly narrative scenes used only in minor positions), angels, evangelists, apostles, saints, and other heavenly characters of considerably lesser size in approximately that order, and mortal souls comparatively tiny.

Though now but a spot on the map of east central France, representing a town of approximately 12,000 population, Autun was long a capital city for regions of considerable extent. In Roman imperial times it was made the chief city of the Gallic tribe of the Aedui, and many classic ruins remain. From 880 to 1276 the counts of Autun were Dukes of Burgundy, and consequently it was then the capital of that region so noted in the early development of French culture.



PLATE XLIII. Saints Peter, John the Evangelist, and Trophime (right to left). Portal. Church of St. Trophime, Arles. Twelfth century.

At the fall of the Roman Empire, western Europe was a relatively primitive area held in check by imperial legions, with classic civilization practiced provincially in scattered colonial centers. The Mediterranean basin on the other hand, with a history of many centuries and stages of cultural development, was a busy field of commercial and cultural activity under the leadership of the two great centers of Christianity. Rome, capital of the Western Church, having lost her struggle to maintain political domination both of Europe and the East, held hegemony of fluctuating force through the office of the papacy. Constantinople, or Byzantium, head of the Eastern Church, was the undisputed center of production and style in the arts, carrying on Hellenistic tradition gradually modified into the rich and colorful Byzantine style. Sculpture, except ivory carving, was rare until revived in the Romanesque period, mosaic and fresco painting being the chief media of architectural decoration.

The art and culture of Provence were always close to those of Italy, and the city of Arles (Arelate) near the mouth of the Rhone was an important center in late classic times, sufficient to have been the seat of a synod of the Church presided over by the Emperor Constantine in A.D. 314. Influence of the Byzantine art of Italy is distinctly reflected in the rich, elaborate sculpture about the portals on the façade of the Cathedral Church of St. Trophime at Arles. The device, for example, of having columns or other architectural decorations rest upon the backs of lions and various grotesque animals was at that time a common practice in the north of Italy. The beasts represent the forces of evil being crushed by the power of the Church. The drapery on the figures of the saints, standing in decreasing order of importance from the doorway out, is developed with narrow linear folds but they are not so linear nor so active in pattern as those previously examined from centers farther to the north. The proportions of the figures likewise are heavier and their poses more static. Thus in many ways the classic influence of the Italo-Byzantine style is apparent in this work, due to regional proximity and the long history of direct relations with Mediterranean culture. The intensity and enthusiasm of new hope, so unmistakable in the ecstatically dynamic style of the north, is here shown perhaps in the compact manner in which the entire surface is developed.

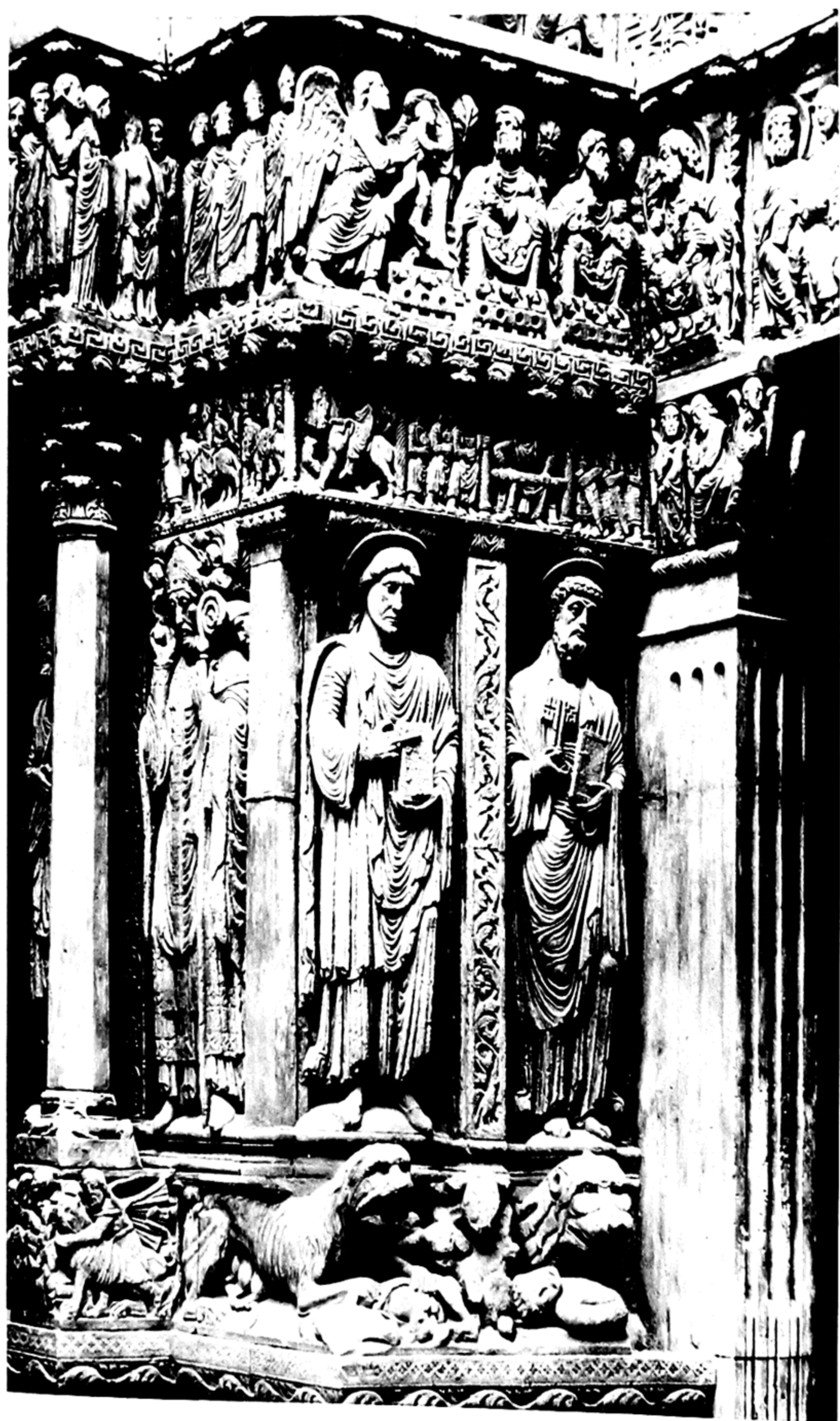


PLATE XLIV. Double capitals. (a) Glass blowing, and (b) Animals. Cloister of the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos. Twelfth century. (c) Scene from the Passion of Christ. Cathedral, Pamplona. Twelfth century.

The Church throughout the Middle Ages was the retreat from a sordid and struggling world, not necessarily in spiritual defeat but for the purpose also of social contribution on a higher cultural level. Wealthy in the ownership of approximately one-third the land under cultivation, powerful as the only permanently coordinated force, and strong in its hold over all classes of the population, it was able to maintain oases of comparative order and quiet for contemplation and cultural production. Physically, this seclusion is epitomized in a characteristic architectural feature of the period, the cloister, which was part of every monastery and many large cathedrals. The cloister was a quiet garden surrounded by a covered gallery of one or two stories in the midst of the compact group of ceremonial, dwelling, and service structures. A low wall at the edge of the garden, surmounted by small columns, held up the roof of the surrounding passage, which generally served for circulation from one section to another. To preserve the architectural sense of openness and grace, double columns were used where an extra weight had to be borne, and the capitals were ingeniously joined.

The three here shown include two interesting stylistic characteristics thus far only partly indicated. Revival of interest in the actualities of the mortal world has already appeared in the individualization of the souls in Judgment from the lintel of the portal at Vézelay. Here an actual scene of everyday life is attempted in the rough but powerfully hewn and spirited representation of a glass-blowing workshop. The slender twisted animals intertwined with an elaborate pattern of vines is a brilliant translation in stone of the so-called interlace or lacertine which had been used for the decoration of manuscripts principally in the north for several centuries. Common throughout Celtic and Scandinavian countries and appearing even in the Far East since prehistoric times, the forerunner of this type of ornament was probably spread by the folk-wandering Scytho-Sarmatian tribes about whom little is known. It was brought to its highest development in the elaborate manuscripts illuminated by Celtic monks in Ireland in the eighth and ninth centuries. The dynamic linear pattern provided an exciting outlet for the energy of Romanesque expression, and these manuscripts are an important source of the style, especially in the north.



PLATE XLV. Capitals. (a) St. Martin, and (b) the Ark on Mt. Ararat. Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun. 1120–1178. (c) Milling, and (d) Hunting. Church of La Madeleine, Vézelay. 1132–1140.

Apparently no scriptural narrative was too complex, no sentiment too abstruse to be crowded somehow into a historiated capital by the ingenious sculptors of the Romanesque period. Their approach was the essence of simplicity. With complete faith in the absolute veracity and significance of every word of Holy Writ, they illustrated it with an uncompromising literalness, simply adapting the elements involved to the needs of the decorative problem at hand. Contradictions neither of narrative content nor of execution are questioned. Thus there is no hesitation about balancing a shed, which is the Ark, on a Mt. Ararat no greater in size, in company with a son of Noah as tall as both together.

The fine carving and ingenious adaptation of the figures grinding grain to the three-sided surface of an engaged capital from the interior of the nave at Vézelay, conforms with the superiority of conception and design shown by the atelier that worked on this monument in the skillful composition of the great central portal. A scriptural reference may be intended, but it is couched in terms of direct reference to the everyday lives of the people.

Almost as brilliant in design and likewise significant as a depiction of contemporary life, the hunting scene offers an interesting contrast with modern thought. The animal being pursued by the huntsman's dog, and invisible at the other side of the capital in this view, is quite unidentifiable, but the background of the scene is clearly a vineyard. Possibly the sculptor had in mind the verse from the Song of Solomon (2: 15), "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." Recently a leading dramatist with a similar moral purpose excoriated the mean and grasping after the same text, but Lillian Hellman's sermon in drama of "The Little Foxes" was an elaborate narrative of contemporary life. In the Romanesque period, virtually the dawn of an indigenous European civilization for the regions beyond the Mediterranean basin, the simple hunting scene was the limit to which the imagination of the sculptor could go, for as yet there was no need of going further.



NORTHERN EUROPEAN GOTHIC

MAN MEETS GOD

GOTHIC art went on to express in its own terms the new cultural order in western Europe, that had been signaled in the resurgence of vitality, the spirit of hope and creative interest of the Romanesque period. It expressed these forces with a gracious warmth and humanity that had not yet been conceived in that excited age which still used the forms expressive of feudalism—other-worldly, formalized, mystic, severe. But men were finding new interest in the world about them as wealth and opportunity grew, and they wanted to see life real, rich, and varied in their art.

The scale of luxurious living and the extent to which new levels of comfort were achieved by wide sections of the population in the Gothic period undoubtedly compared in a relative sense with the advances of which the recent mechanical age is so proud. Trade made available new riches from far and wide to induce production of maximum surpluses. Feudal agriculture had brought probably no more than a third of the land of western Europe under cultivation, the rest remaining a wilderness of forest and heath that isolated one community from another. Vast new areas were cleared and opened up to production by serfs who thus purchased their freedom and held the land on a rental basis. Craftsmen from the manors flocked to the towns where release from feudal dues made it worth while to increase production many times over. They organized into guilds, which aided in raising standards of excellence and efficiency, at the same time that they protected and extended the hard-won freedoms of the new order. A triumphant sense of opulence invests the lives and the art of the thriving new class of townsmen in the Gothic period.

Until championed by Ruskin and others in the Gothic revival of the last century, the term "Gothic" had been one of derision. From the time of the Italian Renaissance artist-critic Giorgio Vasari, academic writers had considered it synonymous with barbarism and grotesquerie, contemptuous of the lack of classic restraint and the ignorance of antique canons in earlier art of northern (*i.e.*, transalpine) origin. Many are offended by the fact that the exuberant and often apparently unruly vitality

of Gothic art defies analysis in terms of their limited, mechanical formulas. Thus it has generally received a condescending, superficial, and arbitrary sort of consideration at the hands of the professors of art. However, Gothic art is important not only as the furthest source of tradition continuous with the culture of today, but also as an antidote to the very generalizations and misunderstood "rules" of classical art under which it is itself damned.

Formulation of Gothic style was largely the work of northern Europe, that is to say, of the regions beyond the Mediterranean basin, for which it was the first thoroughgoing, independent cultural expression. Northern craftsmen saw their task unobscured by the ideas and practices of any previously developed tradition, and consequently the characteristics of Gothic style may be studied in part as a regional expression. To date, descriptions of this aspect of the style and its particular motivations have been vague, distorted, or at best embryonic (*e.g.*, Wölfflin's valuable but incomplete analysis of the polar qualities of form in art). No full analysis can be attempted here, but the elements of dynamic complexity in pattern and structure, mystic illogicality of natural interpretation, and frequent sense of physical as well as emotional tension, may be briefly cited. Gods who are themselves doomed as in the closing section of the Wagnerian Ring cycle, architectural design that completely hides or confuses the structural elements as in the complex ribbed and buttressed support of a lightly soaring Gothic cathedral or in the distorted decoration of a restless rococo palace interior, the theme of intense suffering so poignantly depicted in the great and little-known religious painting of the century before the Reformation in Germany, the bleak and stern persistence of Viking seafarers, are examples from other fields, suggesting the complex and obscure quality of northland culture that has so long defied definition.

Appearing early in the thirteenth century, the new style in sculpture flourished and developed until the close of the fifteenth, when it began gradually to be modified or absorbed into later trends. Because of the virtual lack of national boundaries at the outset of this period and the unifying influence of the Church, a strong international common denominator runs throughout all manifestations of Gothic art. Even Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries produced works distinctly in this vein, but there the period was mainly one of transition under the influence of the new order, away from eastern Byzantine forms. Much art was still produced there by provincial and itinerant Byzantine craftsmen from whom native Italian artists received most of their training. When the struggle was complete, the art of Italy was the Renaissance. Thus the Gothic period appears as little more than an outside current in the early stages of Italian art, as the Renaissance is virtually a precious and academic importation later in the north.

The ascetic aspects of medieval Christianity of course began to lose their popular appeal as personal and material ambition became an accepted program of life, but the Church remained a leading force. New facets of Christian doctrine were found to alter the interpretation of godhead as having a broad and compassionate interest in humanity. Hence Gothic sculpture no longer presents a remote, but humane and at times even humble group of gracious and sympathetic personalities, who correspond to the present connotation of the word "saintly" far more than did the celestial hierarchy of the earlier Church. The awful and uncompromising figure of the Christ of a Judgment that emphasized the ruthless and violent destruction of the world sinks into the background behind a host of saints and martyrs each with some personal history or local dedication that establishes a bond between himself and the individual mortal communicant. Foremost among them is Our Gracious Lady, the Mother of Christ. Jesus Himself is shown as the Man of Sorrows, the humble struggling figure of the Passion rather than the King of Heaven, Creator of All Things, and Final Judge He had been down through the age of feudalism. In art, these transformed and rediscovered personalities are presented in the clothes and settings of the time in which they are made, not in the mysterious trappings and formalizations of Romanesque and earlier medieval art.

For the townsman burgeoning and battenning on his new path to wealth cannot tolerate the thought of an eternal leveling with all men of faith, or of an uncompromising doom. Surely he, proud possessor, capable master, successful developer, must have some avenue of special consideration, some channel of special pleading where his particular abilities may be recognized in heaven as they have been on earth. And why, indeed, be dour and foreboding in a world of infinite promise and rich comfort? Thus Gothic sculpture questions the culture of its immediate past and answers with a rich and brilliant production in which the glories of heaven become more and more identified with those of earth.

PLATE XLVI. Main (west) façade. Cathedral of Notre Dame, Reims. *Ca.*
1240–1280.

Merchants on the move from market to market gave thirteenth-century Europe the semblance of a great hill of ants each with his burden, be it a peddler's pack or a laden train of wagons. The new tastes and new contacts that were developed in the Crusades helped to revive Mediterranean trade, causing rich and exotic Levantine goods to pour into Europe by way of Venice. For the first time in history the North Sea became an established trading thoroughfare with lumber, fish, tallow, leather, and fur pouring down through Bruges. A meeting place was needed where the raw materials of the North could be exchanged for the luxury products of the East. It was found on the plains of Champagne, where a series of great fairs or supermarkets were in continuous session throughout the year at three of its principal towns, one of which, Troyes, gave its name to a system of weights and measures still in use. Reims had been an important center of this prosperous region since Roman imperial days, and in view of the right of her archbishops to consecrate the kings of France, her cathedral enjoyed national prominence.

Elaborate sculpture along with carved window tracery, buttresses, spires, miscellaneous ribs, moldings, corbels, crocketing, and other devices makes of the exterior of a Gothic cathedral a restless complexity that is of the northern spirit. This colorful richness also expresses delight in new-found material prosperity. The sculptural subjects are still the symbolical tales of Holy Writ, but they bear a new emphasis. The central place is now reserved for scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin, whose heavenly coronation is shown unusually located in the gable above the arches of the middle doorway, other main events from Her life on the columns at the sides. The south portal shows the subject that had been the principal theme in Romanesque times, the Christ of Judgment with scenes from the apocalyptic vision of St. John on the arches, and precursors of Christ and apostles on the columns; to the north, Christ appears in His newly emphasized role of suffering for mankind, the Crucifixion, with local saints and martyrs on the columns. In each doorway the blocks forming the arches are carved with small figures related to the main theme. Many other figures are placed in the upper reaches of the building, adding still further elements of the Christian epic.

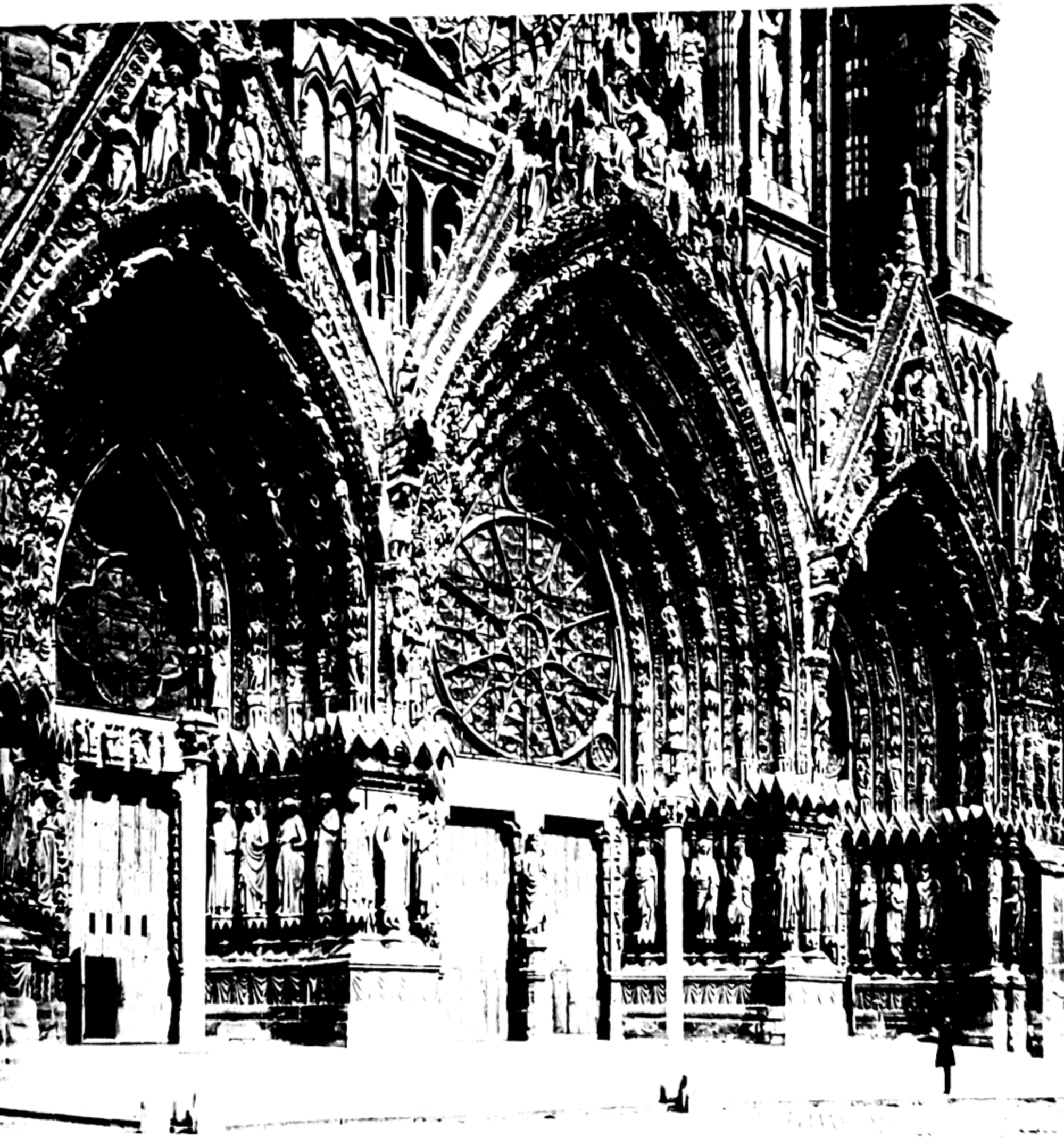


PLATE XLVII. Angel and Virgin of the Annunciation. Column figures from the central portal, main (west) facade, Cathedral of Notre Dame, Reims. Stone; *ca.* 1260.

Smilingly the angel of the Lord delivers his great message. With humble and gracious joy it is received by the Mother of God. Such are the personalities that greet the layman invitingly at the entrance to the Gothic cathedral, instead of the mystic, agitated, and grandiose Romanesque compositions calculated to convey compellingly the eternal power and glory of the heavenly kingdom. The change is an expression of the continuing psychological reorientation of human society begun in the Romanesque period. As growing wealth from the new marts of trade increased the power and standard of living of the city dwellers, the world of the thirteenth century became a less mysterious place—fate seemed less capricious and more dependent on individual effort. The Gothic townsman doubtless began to be a bit stiff-necked about priestly counsels of doom and the special direction against the rich of the wrath to come. By preference he began to see in Christ the Saviour Who had suffered to free mankind of sin, and to look among His heavenly family for the particular one who could best understand his life and intercede in heaven for his salvation.

The great monumental doorways of the Cathedral were consequently peopled with a variety of characters of human warmth and charm, ready to receive the mortal communicants and guide their erring steps with personal understanding and protection to eternal glory. Each saint had a special responsibility based on his or her earthly career, to a given locality, trade, organization, or just one's given name. Thus they had to seem real and their life stories had to be told interestingly and with conviction. As people were enabled to feel some personal importance and mastery of their fate, cultural expression began to be humanized.



PLATE XLVIII. The Virgin and St. Elizabeth of the Visitation. Column figures from the central portal, main (west) façade, Cathedral of Notre Dame, Reims. Stone; *ca.* 1250.

There is a common notion that the Italian Renaissance rescued classic culture from the complete oblivion that had settled upon it when the barbarian hordes from the north overran the Italian peninsula. The two figures of the Visitation group from Reims Cathedral, however, show an obvious attempt at imitation of classic style made 200 years before the studies of classical antiquity pursued by Florentine artists and scholars under the patronage of the Medici. The full-faced beauty of the Virgin, the study of age in the head of St. Elizabeth suggesting Roman portraiture, their relaxed postures and enveloping togalike garments developed in a multitude of narrow folds, unmistakably recall many Greek and Roman figures.

In one form or another classic influence has always been present in European art. Several reasons have been suggested for the occurrence of so literal an approximation in this instance. As a capital of the tribe of the Remi in classic times, friendly to Rome, the city of Reims was an ancient center of colonial activity, and doubtless in the Middle Ages still possessed familiar examples of Roman art such as the great triumphal arch, which persisted to modern times. During the Carolingian revival of interest in classic culture in the tenth century, Archbishop Adalberon founded schools of "liberal arts," which made Reims an important intellectual center, and the classical studies that were doubtless included may have left a particularly deep impression on the community. The influence of the Crusades may also be cited, for much Hellenistic art was visible in the Levant and several counts of Champagne accompanied the forces to the East. For a time the house ruled in the Holy Land, during the victorious period in the thirteenth century before the Christian forces were expelled by the advancing Turks, and Geoffroy de Villehardouin (*ca.* 1160–*ca.* 1213), famous historian, diplomat, and soldier active in the leadership of the fourth crusade, which he chronicled as the "Conquest of Constantinople," was a knight of Champagne. As "marshal of Romanie," a vaguely defined region which was probably the whole of the Balkan Peninsula, much of his time was actually spent in campaigns on the soil of ancient Greece.



PLATE XLIX. (a) Detail, head of the Virgin from the Visitation group. (b) Detail, head of Joseph from the Presentation group. Central portal, main (west) façade, Cathedral of Notre Dame, Reims. Stone; *ca.* 1250–1260.

The animation of Joseph's inquisitive glance and the active pattern of his hair and beard and the full-faced feminine beauty of the Virgin show clearly the new intent of the thirteenth-century sculptors to make their scriptural narrative appear human and alive. Although both are placed in the central portal, devoted to the life of the Virgin, each conforms to a somewhat different stylistic type. This is an unusual feature of the sculpture of Reims Cathedral, which seems to follow several different styles, whereas generally at that period style was uniform for a given time and place. The Visitation group (Plate XLVIII) in the classic manner probably represents the culmination of an earlier style developed at Reims; Joseph and the Angel of the Annunciation (Plate XLVII) are typical of a number of figures by a later or "second school" of Reims, and several other figures represent the styles found in the sculpture on the cathedrals at Amiens and Chartres. The presence of such a variety of styles may reflect the national prominence of Reims, the sculptures themselves or the workmen who made them possibly having been sent as a contribution from these communities.

As shown in a sculptured group in the upper portion of the façade, the Frankish king Clovis had been baptized at Reims on Christmas Day, 496, after defeating the Alamanni, and 3000 of his followers were converted with him. During the course of the battle, Clovis had sworn that if victory were given him by the God of his Christian queen, Clothilda, he would return undying allegiance. Christianity won great prestige from the event, which aided its establishment throughout the north of Europe. A figure of the sainted Clothilda was carved on one of the columns of the north (left) portal. The medieval kings of France went to Reims for their coronation in order to be anointed with holy oil from a vial said to have been carried from heaven by a white dove for the baptism of Clovis, a legend invented three centuries after the event by Bishop Hincmar.

French Gothic sculpture suffered an eclipse during most of the fourteenth century in the general depression of France due to her inability to halt repeated English raids in the Hundred Years' War. The Gothic style developed apace in Germany, however, some of the earlier work deriving its style clearly from Reims, perhaps through actual migration of the sculptors and their assistants after work there ceased.



PLATE L. Detail, figure of Moses, from the Well of Moses, by Claes Sluter (*d.* 1406). Dijon Museum. Stone; *ca.* 1400.

The territory of the old French province of Burgundy expanded and contracted throughout the age of feudalism according to the abilities, ambitions, military powers, and marital relations of its rulers. Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy, with other princes of the blood, had even been called to the regency of France at the death of Charles V in 1380, and again during Charles VI's madness in 1392. Skillful dedication to the internal administration of his own domain, including adaptations to the rising tide of commerce and finance, show him to have been an intelligent ruler, and his reign was a favorable one for his people. In the thirteenth century Dijon had been made the ducal residence and artists were gathered from Flanders and the north of France to decorate the palace and other monuments of the ruling house, until the union of the duchy with the crown of France in 1477 deprived the town of the splendor of the ducal court. The most famous of the artists brought to Dijon for the glory of the House of Burgundy was Claes Sluter, a Dutch sculptor who developed an important and influential workshop there.

The Well with the figures of Moses and Old Testament prophets was made by Sluter for the Carthusian monastery, which Philip the Bold had built as a family mausoleum. It has since been replaced by a lunatic asylum, and the Well, along with the tombs of Philip the Bold and his son John the Fearless, removed to the museum in the town hall of Dijon, built around parts of the ancient ducal palace. This juxtaposition is virtually a parable of the changes in progress during the Gothic period. As by the waves of the flowing tide, here gently lapping on the open shore, elsewhere pounding with the force of the surf against stubborn barriers, the old feudal rulers were everywhere irresistibly submerged in the rising power of the townsmen, which they often aided, unwittingly or for their immediate individual benefit, as often bitterly but fruitlessly opposed.



PLATE LI. Mourners from the tomb of Philip the Bold, by Claes Sluter and Claes van der Werve (*d.* 1439). Dijon Museum. Stone; 1384–1411.

An outstanding function of sculpture has ever been to monumentalize the contemporary attitude of mankind toward the perishability of human flesh. In the tombs of those who reign with a sense of absolute power is often shown a tendency to struggle against death, in some way to gain an extension, an admission to the godly realm of eternity, by an assertion of their earthly importance, as for example in Egypt. In a more equalized society there is apt to be a more intelligent acceptance of death, a hope perhaps for immortality in another world, remembrance in this, but an emphasis on the fact of departure from the earthly company, as in Greek grave reliefs which often show scenes of actual leave-taking. An equally frank attitude was adopted in this matter-of-fact time of growing dependence on material wealth and interest in worldly fortune, which made one man as good as the next and gave him power regardless of birth. These mourning figures, from a series made by Claes Sluter with the assistance of his nephew and pupil Claes van der Werve for the tomb of Philip the Bold of Burgundy, are typical of a form used in this period and brought to its greatest importance by Sluter's workshop. Small figures of monks with great show of emotion simply bewail the tragic loss, some praying from books, some bent and shaken with grief, others blowing their tearful noses in the voluminous folds of their monastic habits. The calm classic restraint of a Greek stele here, of course, is replaced by an unmeasured expression of bereavement, which is the tense northern fear of the unknown in nature, so much less friendly in the lands that know winter than on the sun-bathed shores of the Mediterranean Sea.



PLATE LII. Margrave Ekkehard and his wife Uta. Naumburg Cathedral;
interior, west choir. Stone; 1250-1260.

Around the west choir of Naumburg Cathedral stand a series of strikingly individualized figures representing noble founders of the local dynasty. Strictly speaking they are not portraits, for the names they bear (painted on the shields of the men) are of personages from a period several generations earlier than the sculpture. They must certainly have been studied from living people, however, and bespeak the growing interest in individual personality during the Gothic period which is still basic in the modern culture of the Western world. The portraits of this imperious pair were probably commissioned by their descendants to honor longingly in a period of waning feudal power the favorable position they had held as lords of the domain "when knighthood was in flower."

For the Gothic period was an age of towns. Organized merchants and master craftsmen had forced their noble and ecclesiastical rulers to surrender feudal privileges and dues, until the town dweller was virtually free of all restrictions but those imposed for his own benefit by his own guilds and elected civic councils. In Germany, the merchant guilds or *hanses* were further strengthened by federation into leagues like the powerful Hanseatic League formed in the thirteenth century. It maintained a navy to keep the North Sea clear of piracy, garrisoned and regulated over 100 trading posts from Holland to Russia, and administered a virtual monopoly over northern European trade including that of England, until the growing political unity of nations provided a more strongly centralized force several centuries later. In southern Germany a group of towns joined together for protection against encroachments and impositions by feudal rulers in the Swabian League. It was opposed by an organization of lesser nobles of the region known as the *Schlegelerbund* from *schlegel* or "maul," a symbol of force indicating the repressive role that had been assumed by outworn feudal authority. The proudly sullen expression of this knight suggests his affinity with this group, though he is of a different region.



PLATE LIII. The tribute money. Detail of frieze from the west choir screen; interior, Naumburg Cathedral. Stone; 1250–1260.

Masterful breadth of modeling adds power and intensity to this dramatic representation of Judas's treachery. The compact grouping of the figures, especially in the center where hands, legs, and drapery are worked together in a brilliantly full pattern, gives it unsurpassed plastic force despite its comparatively small size. This is one of a stirring series of scenes representing the Passion of Christ, ranged along the top of a screen separating the choir and apse at the west end of the cathedral from the nave. It clearly shows the new dramatic interest in scriptural narrative as the actual experience of living men and women. Not only is the detailed story of the life of Christ told over and over in the Gothic period, but the lives of the Virgin, of the Apostles, and of various local saints are generously recounted. The variety of this new medium of religious instruction holds the newly awakened interests of the people and provides a range in which each may find the lesson of faith that applies most convincingly to his particular situation. Abstract symbolism is no longer the order of the day. The sense of an emotionally living event must be conveyed in which real, feeling people participate. The facial expressions in this group are remarkably dramatic. The Pharisees are shown wearing the tall, pointed hats the Jews were required to wear in the sculptor's time and hence familiar to his medieval audience. More self-consciously of course a modern theatrical director, trying to make the relatively remote narrative of a Shakespearean drama "come to life" for an audience of today, will similarly attempt to make the characters more convincing by dressing them in modern clothes.



PLATE LIV. (a) Phrygian Sibyl and (b) Cicero, by Jörg Syrlin. Details from choir stalls; interior, Ulm Cathedral. Wood; late fifteenth century.

Classical personalities had figured in medieval church lore along with some of the Old Testament prophets, through interpretations whereby their words were shown to foretell the coming of Christ as Saviour of mankind. This curiously top-hatted Cicero and equally dressy sibyl, along with several other classical figures in the same series, were doubtless used for that reason; perhaps, too, the early stirrings of the Renaissance in Italy were already felt sufficiently to give them added meaning. However, it is clear that the spirit in which they are done is in no way an attempt to recapture the semblance and cultural attitudes of another day. It is a straightforward, self-confident acceptance of the current state of affairs as equal or superior to any that has been. The notion today that such expressions are naïve or humorous is in a sense a reflection on contemporary cultural diffidence and confusion. Medieval costume was so elaborately styled and constantly changing that there could have been no thought that it existed in any other age. But there was simply no reason for spending any effort on recapturing the discarded past in times of such rapid and successful growth. The elaboration and artificiality of medieval clothing shown on these figures are an index of the fact that the only store of wealth for the merchant craftsmen of the Middle Ages was in goods. Money was slowly coming into use, but it was still mainly a device to facilitate exchange. Thus the best store of capital was in something luxurious that someone could buy; the best way to show one had plenty was to use or wear some of it, or exchange it for something that might be splendidly displayed.



PLATE LV. (a) Madonna and Child from Dangolsheim. Berlin, Deutsches Museum. Wood; painted *ca.* 1460–1470. (b) Virgin of Mercy, from Upper Swabia. Berlin, Deutsches Museum. Wood, painted; *ca.* 1480.

These two groups in the brilliant craft of the late Gothic style in Germany, show clearly the new role that made the Virgin Mary the most important figure in the Christian hierarchy as the strictness and severity of feudal Christianity abated. On the left, She is the Mother, young and charming, and one may reflect that the stern Judge, Ruler of Heaven, and Son of God was at one time the playful, scrambling Child in Her arms, completely dependent on Her. Therefore Mary's role in the group on the right, of Intercessor with the Lord for those who have sought and earned Her mercy, is perfectly plausible in terms of the strong family solidarity of the Middle Ages. And it is clear that this is the protection She is giving the realistically carved little people under Her cloak, for they are all looking up anxiously in the direction of Her own glance in supplication of Heavenly Mercy.

Probably at no other time has wood been a more important medium of expression. Along with stained glass, tapestry, and precious metals, carved stone and wood were used to decorate the brilliant interiors of larger Gothic churches. There were no seats for the medieval congregation, who either stood or knelt during services, but choir stalls and other incidental furniture in the ecclesiastical section of the building provided opportunity for carving, and behind the altar rose great retables in carved and painted wood. Domestic furniture in wealthy homes was elaborately carved, and small votive figures like these were placed about.

As technical ability grew in respect to the new realistic objectives, sculptural style became more dynamic in a new sense. Whereas movement in Romanesque sculpture was largely a matter of two-dimensional pattern, the design now moves freely through the total volume of the composition developing a sense of depth. This is quite apparent in the swirling hair and drapery of the *Dangolsheim Madonna*. Though a general expression of calm pervades the *Madonna of Mercy*, strict verticals are avoided in the falling robe, the shawl describes an almost spiral path as it surrounds the head both vertically and horizontally, and heavy folds of sleeve hang over the arms in a similar movement in depth.



PLATE LVI. Scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary. High altar by Tilman Riemenschneider (1468–1531). Creglingen, Lower Franconia. Wood; *ca.* 1495–1499.

The Virgin Mary, Her Assumption to heaven in the great central panel, Her Coronation by the Lord in the maze of Gothic tracery above, and other scenes from Her life on the folding panels or wings at the sides are the subject of this, one of the greatest single masterpieces of the brilliant school of Gothic art that flourished on the basis of the patronage of the new-rich city folk in fifteenth-century Germany. It was an age of cities and Germany was a country of cities; her aspirations in prosperity were expressed by a brilliant group of painters including Dürer, Holbein, Cranach, Grünewald, and Altdorfer. A parallel development of sculpture centered in the Franconian school of Nuremberg under the leadership of the wood carver Veit Stoss, the stone carver Adam Kraft, and the bronze founder Peter Vischer.

Possibly the greatest sculptor of all, however, was the single outstanding master of the school of Lower Franconia, Tilman Riemenschneider, who worked in the town of Würzburg. At fifteen years of age, which was not young for advanced technical training in the age of craftsmanship, he was already enrolled in the painters' and sculptors' guild of St. Luke and received the "rights of a townsman" on the last day of February, 1485, two years later. As a master artist he was a merchant craftsman like the draper, the tailor, the mason, or the carpenter, hiring, training, and directing assistants; buying raw materials; signing contracts for delivery of work ordered at a given price, of a stated quality, and in a stipulated period. Civic responsibility, too, rested on the leading successful burghers. Riemenschneider sat without interruption on the town council from 1504 to 1525, and was elected burgomaster in 1520. As a member of a rising group, itself still hemmed in to some extent by outworn feudal forms and privileges, he sided against the bishop in a local outbreak of the Peasants' Revolt, a bloody but unorganized series of uprisings of the rural masses who continued to labor in poverty despite urban prosperity. He was imprisoned and tortured in 1525; a great part of his fortune was confiscated on his release; and the rest of his life was spent in complete obscurity.

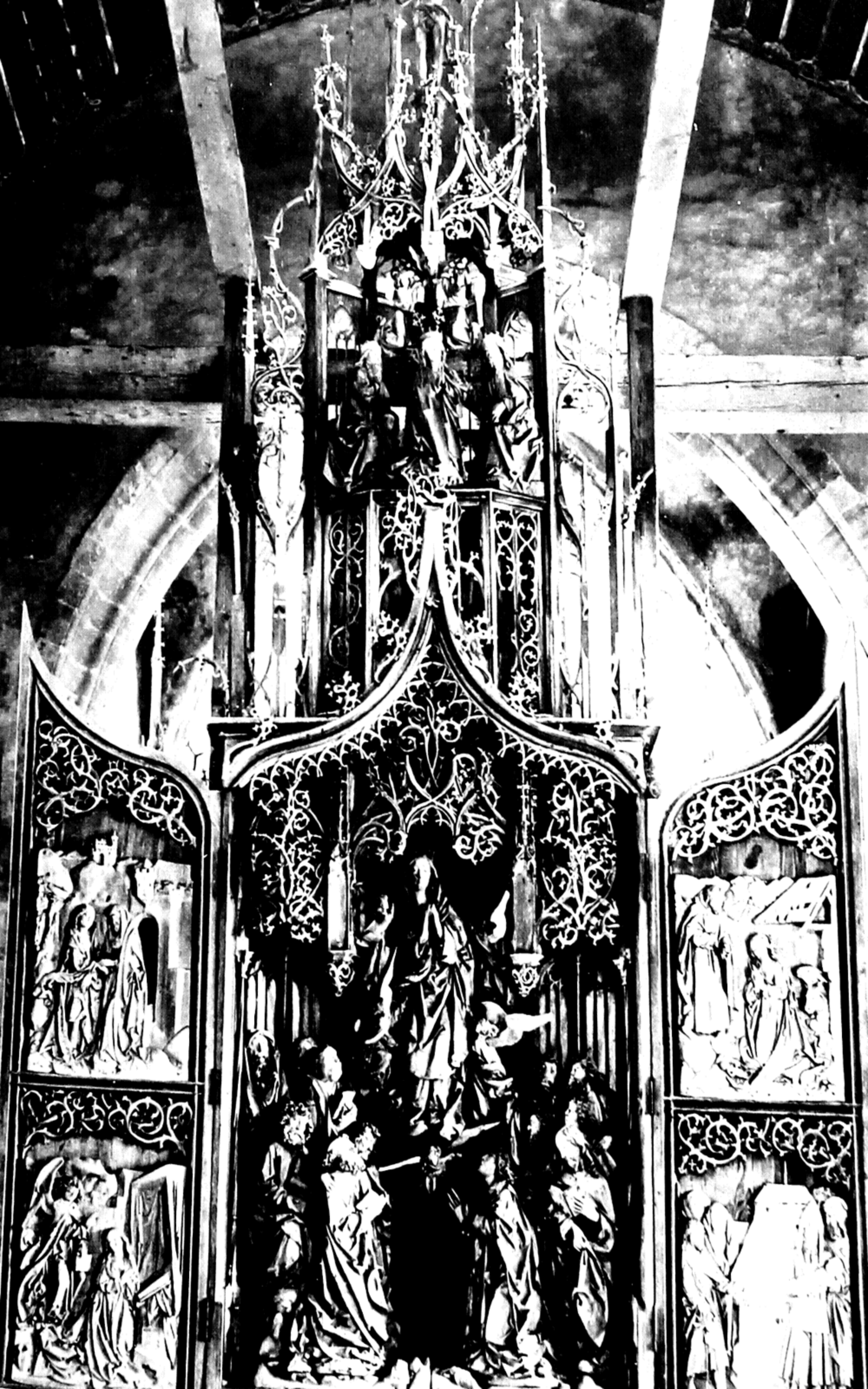


PLATE LVII. Head of the Apostle Philip. Detail from the Mary Altar by
Tilman Riemenschneider. Creglingen, Lower Franconia. Wood; *ca.*
1495–1499.

The person of a pious German monk lost at prayer in adoration of the Holy Mother appears in this detail from Riemenschneider's great Mary Altar as literally as though he had included the portrait of a friend from the local monastery, which indeed he may have done. Not only is the spirit thoroughly conveyed in the prayerful hands, humble shoulders, and almost ecstatically concentrated visage, but with consummate mastery the living physical presence is likewise created to fulfill the vision of the literal-minded townsmen, many of whom, as craftsmen themselves in other fields, must have delighted also in the skill of an intricate job well done. Riemenschneider discarded the practice of painting and gilding the figures and backgrounds, which contributed such brilliance and realistic detail to earlier carved altarpieces, getting all the effects of fleshy face, veined hands, soft or sharp wrinkles, directly with his tools in the laboriously worked surface of the wood. His skill appears further in the veritable tour de force of delicate, intertwining Gothic tracery of the upper stages, complex almost as a growing vine. This love of intricacy is a characteristic of northern art generally, from prehistoric times until the nineteenth century when regional differences in art become less distinct.

The presence of this work, one of the finest and largest of its type—it stands almost thirty feet high, with the figures of the central panel about three-quarters life size—in the tiny south German village of Creglingen outside of Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber, gives rise to some question. It is presumed that this altarpiece, like that of the Holy Blood by the same master, was intended for the Church of St. James in Rothenburg, but was removed from the danger of destruction in the iconoclastic riots of the Reformation, soon to be heralded by the posting of Luther's "95 Theses" at Wittenberg in 1517.



PLATE LVIII. Christ in the house of Simon, by Tilman Riemenschneider.
Berlin, Deutsches Museum. Wood; *ca.* 1490.

Printing with movable type was discovered in the middle of the fifteenth century, probably by Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz, not so far from Riemenschneider's adopted town of Würzburg, and by the beginning of the Reformation the Bible had appeared in fourteen High German and four Low German editions. Made to imitate illuminated manuscripts, with much hand-drawn decoration in color, the earliest books were expensive and consequently limited in circulation, but they undoubtedly expressed and helped to further the development of the new interest of practical men in reading Scripture, both for literary entertainment and for self-instruction. Thus the specific events of the life of Christ, the Virgin, and of various saints were constantly presented in sculpture, as well as in painting and in mystery plays, with settings, costumes, and incidental details as though they were actual happenings of the artist's own time. In such presentations the Gospel becomes real and Christ is made to seem human, even intimate to men whose lives are given over to hard-headed manipulation of goods, whose success derived from experience and knowledge, instead of obedience to authority and exercises of faith. This scene of the unnamed sinner who anointed and washed the feet of Christ " . . . and did wipe them with the hairs of her head" as he sat at meat in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7: 36-50), may have been especially interesting at the time, for the parable by which the Lord explained to Simon his favor of the woman. It begins, "There was a certain creditor that had two debtors. . . . "

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PLATE LIX. Virgin and child with St. Anne. Lower Rhenish School. Berlin, Deutsches Museum. Wood; latter half of the fifteenth century.

In the Church, the Gothic period was the age of the Virgin, and Her special adoration was developed to a point that was frowned upon as "Mariolatry" in the Reformation. Processions, pilgrimages, gifts, churches, and cathedrals were dedicated to Her name. In art every phase of Her life was represented, and though She was at times honored as Queen of Heaven, Her effigies crowned with gold and laden with jewels, She was loved by the people for Her graciousness and simplicity. Hence the subject of the Virgin and Child with Her mother, St. Anne, became a popular one in painting and sculpture. The figure of St. Anne usually dominates the group as in this case, in which the childish innocence of the Virgin is represented in an obvious degree.

The parents of the Virgin are often referred to as an additional feature of interest in Her story, presenting a gracious reflection of the current domestic picture. The raising of children was one of the crafts in the feminine domain of home management, which in those days was one of no little lore and skill, to be handed on from mother to daughter as the father trained his son in the skills and secrets of his trade. Here the patient Anna seems to be supervising her Daughter's instruction of the Blessed Infant.



PLATE LX. Death of the Virgin. Lower Rhenish School. Berlin, Deutsches Museum. Wood; fifteenth century.

Lacking the suavity of form and composition achieved by the greatest masters of the Italian Renaissance through sympathetic study of classic art, or the graceful delicacy achieved by later French artists in their conscious search for aesthetic pleasure and refinement, the artists of Germany seem to have excelled in the expression of deep human emotion. In view of the special regard for the Virgin in the Gothic period, the subject of Her death becomes the occasion of a peculiarly tender grief. The comparatively elaborate and symbolic story of the death of Christ is supposed also to occasion a sense of grief, but the knowledge of impending resurrection and the cosmic consequences of Calvary have such triumphant implications that real sorrow can be but a small part of the picture. To be sure Mary, too, ascends to heaven after Her death, but here the sculptor has striven to achieve a sense of the passing of someone near, by the use of intimate details such as the bed slippers and the lacings at the sides of the mattress or feather bed. The grief of the apostles is presented in a remarkable variety of facial expression and bodily posture with true and convincing emotional quality, and the figure to the right symbolically struggling to prevent the flame of the lamp from going out, has a really worried expression as he puffs at the recalcitrant object. Although the manner of representation is now realistic, there is still a sense of compact, busy animation inherent in the material of the composition regardless of the gestures of the figures, which reflects the same tensility and excitement that was conveyed by the obvious linear movement in Romanesque art. In European art, especially before the eighteenth century, this type of movement often implies a northern source.



ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

THE JEWELLED DAGGER

FOR FOUR centuries western Europe has stood in awe of the mixture of brilliance and bestiality that flourished in the great cities of Italy during the Renaissance. Creative and destructive forces alike have been romanticized: the dogmatic naïveté and arrogance of its academies; the hideous immorality, treachery, and crime that sully the high-sounding names of its noble rulers; as well as the fine kernel of discovery, scholarship, and creation that was the living core of this remarkable age.

Economically, the background of the Italian Renaissance corresponded closely with that of the Gothic period in northern Europe. It was an age of cities and, in the towns of Italy, merchants and craftsmen thrived on the luxury end of the same trade that nourished new life throughout all Europe in the prelude to modern times. As early as 1176 the Lombard League (of city-states) had defeated Frederick Barbarossa, demanding as the price of victory no more than recognition of the sovereignty of the individual cities under their elected councils. They were to be permitted to carry on and regulate the business of their respective communities, free from interference by feudal authority, and to wage war individually in defense of their own interests.

The main difference between north and south was that the culture of the new order was worked out in the north virtually on a clean slate, previous cultural development of the region having amounted to little more than a basic primitive organization overlaid with a thin veneer of Roman provincial forms. In Italy, on the other hand, the situation was inescapably affected by the weight of age-old forms and practices of Mediterranean culture. The complex and extensive tradition of the region had various results, both favorable and obstructive.

In the first place, the obstacles of vested interest and habitual forms caused delay, so that the Renaissance, especially in respect to the plastic arts, emerges a bit later than the Gothic culture of the north. The consolidated forces of the towns in the powerful Hanseatic and Swabian leagues were virtually unopposed in Germany except by individuals or small sporadic alliances among the hereditary nobility, but the towns of Italy allowed themselves to be divided in meaningless, opportunistic

alliances with the two main institutions of the passing order. The hideously treacherous and fratricidal struggle of Guelphs and Ghibellines dissipated progressive forces in a blind alley of political suicide. The former represented the rising commercial aristocracy, but they accepted alliance with the established though faltering power of the Papacy. Their opponents, party of the ancient hereditary landowning families, energetically consolidated the defense of the waning feudal order. Shifts in allegiance were frequent, coveted gains in pillage, political intrigue, or mere personal whim leading those in power to keep the entire populace embroiled for generations in a wasteful and confused struggle.

Another retarding influence on the development of a new art in Italy was its provincial dependence in the plastic arts on the production of Byzantium (Constantinople). The ancient eastern heir of Greek culture occupied a position for the Mediterranean world of art similar to that which Paris in the nineteenth century, until quite recently, occupied for all of Europe and the Americas. Much Italian painting was the product of itinerant Greek craftsmen who trained her artists in the decorative, unrealistic Byzantine style. In view of the use of glass mosaic and fresco painting for architectural decoration, there was almost no monumental sculpture. From the time of Giotto at the end of the thirteenth century until the Naturalism of the early fifteenth century was well under way, however, a moderate infiltration of Gothic art had gradually won Italy to western European taste. Then Constantinople fell to the advancing Turks in 1453, causing repercussions in many aspects of European civilization, among which was the final release of Italian art from the last vestiges of eastern bondage.

On the positive side, the ancient traditions of the Mediterranean area may be said to have contributed to Renaissance style a realization of sensuous and decorative values in art, a striving for beauty as well as expression, which inspires the sophisticated discipline and grace of Italian Renaissance art, and more specifically the consciousness of kinship with the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome. The attempt to recreate classic culture became the conscious, informing influence of the Renaissance, its very name signifying the "rebirth" of ancient civilization.

The meaning of the extensive reference to classic sources in the Renaissance is complex. Primarily the philosophy and art of antiquity, with its emphasis on the development of Man and his sovereignty in the world, provided moral strength and technical means with which to break the stultifying orthodoxy of the Middle Ages. By their example, freedom of inquiry was established and the study of Man and his personal welfare were again elevated to a place of dignity, from which resulted the advances of social and scientific thought that have transformed the modern world with accelerated progress down to the still pregnant present. But at the same time

others made of the study and re-creation of the ancient world a blind and empty fetish.

"Purity of style" became a watchword meaning the abstract perfection with which supposed principles of the classic model were followed, be it the cadence or use of words, the dimensions of an architectural molding, or an empirical proposition in natural science. Great skill in the imitation of ancient examples was attained in many fields. For a time the literary future of the new Italian language was threatened by the brilliance of prose and verse composed in the classical languages. Supposed precision in the emulation of classic style became the hallmark of cultural accomplishment in every field regardless of any lack of creative vitality. From this attitude has sprung the lifeless preachment of formulas too often found in the academies of art and learning from that time to the present; thence the stifflingly prevalent concept of art and culture as a veneer, independent of one's conduct of life, unrelated to one's attitude toward the society of one's fellow men.

There was good reason for the artists of the Renaissance to resort to academic or remote classical formulations. They were thus released from the responsibility of directly expressing the life about them, which was hardly appropriate to monumental exposition in literal terms. The literary, artistic, and courtly refinements of the period were practiced and promoted by individuals whose dealings with their fellow men were at the same time marked by brutality, lust, treason, and violence to a degree unbelievable within the pale even of the most elementary human society. Gross appetites and savage passions of those in power, no longer held in check by medieval piety and forgetful of the simplest restraints necessary to any form of social living, were let loose in an unbridled orgy of self-indulgence. To be sure, great artists masterfully exploited their respective media, creating monuments that possess excellent and important intrinsic aesthetic qualities; but in respect to social reference or concrete meaning they are for the most part grandiose, empty, and artificial fronts for ruthless political and economic despotism.

The *quattrocento* [fifteenth century, literally "the four(teen) hundreds"] was said to be the age of learning, the *cinquecento* (sixteenth century), the age of beauty, but the sophistication, grandeur, and complicated grace, which are meant in the use of this term, arose from the pernicious notion that beauty is an artificial quality not to be found within the limits of practical life. The later decadence of Italian art carries on, revels indeed in this significant fallacy, as the art of the Italian Renaissance continues beyond the stage at which monumental Gothic art in Germany was cut off by the iconoclastic reforms of Protestantism. In the ascendancy of the powerful Hapsburg Holy Roman emperors over the divided and weakened glory of Italy, two institutions from Catholic Spain were imposed to reaffirm the power of the Church

of Rome and to repress dissent and criticism. The Inquisition and the Jesuit order accomplished the Counter Reformation in Italy. It is expressed by seventeenth-century art in the dynamic and luxuriously sensuous aggrandizement of Renaissance classic forms known as the Baroque. This style achieves extremes in technical complexity and emotional exaggeration of which the artificiality is at last obvious to most modern beholders.

With its long unbroken development from a comparatively primitive stage to one of great technical and cultural sophistication, Italian art of the fourteenth to the eighteenth century presents with unusual completeness the characteristic stages through which cultural expression generally appears to unfold. There is a tendency, at least under the conditions of European culture, for such an expression to start out with forms that are essentially static and analytical in style, and gradually evolve a more complex, dynamic, centralized, but radiating manner of representation and formal organization. There is no opportunity here for an analysis of this tendency, which, though widely recognized, has not yet been adequately described or interpreted, but its general character may be observed in the approximately chronological arrangement of the selected works.

Personalities, careers, and individual styles of outstanding artists became important to a greater degree than ever before in the Renaissance, perhaps as a reflection of the general emphasis on the individual. Three artists have been selected to represent the character of the ages they respectively dominate: Donatello, the sculptor of the intense and inquisitive naturalism of the *quattrocento*; Michelangelo, the universal genius whose sculpture expresses troubled aspiration toward sincere but artificial visions of power and scope inspired by Renaissance humanism; and Bernini, the technical wizard of the Jesuitical Baroque style, which was the face of the Counter Reformation. Works of several others are added to bring out or emphasize specific aspects of their respective ages not fully indicated in the present selections of the three leading masters.

PLATE LXI. "Gates of Paradise," east doors of the Baptistery, Florence, by Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378–1455). Bronze; 1425–1452.

So striking in their original gilding that Michelangelo said they were fit to be the gates of Paradise, Ghiberti's doors for the Florentine Baptistery have been popularly accorded that title ever since. The great composition in relief sculpture marks a definite advance toward the professional recognition of artists in the new age of individualism. In all, three sets were made. The first pair of doors for the south side of the octagonal Baptistery had been ordered about a century earlier from Andrea Pisano (1273–1348). As a competent craftsman he was given a set of subjects and a general plan of composition, which was a series of small groups of Biblical figures enframed in a conventional Gothic lozenge. When the second set of doors was to be commissioned for the north side of the building, however, the concept of the importance of individual differences of personality among artists had grown to such an extent that it was decided to hold a competition amongst the artists of Florence to determine the one best fitted for the task. Seventeen of the leading artists of Florence took part and the commission was awarded to Ghiberti. Again the pattern and subjects were prescribed, a general scheme corresponding to the successful arrangement of the earlier doors, which Ghiberti carried out in graceful Gothic figures much like those of Pisano except that they were more slender and the groupings more complex.

Commissioned in 1403, the second doors were not completed until 1424, but their success was so great that a third pair was immediately ordered from the same artist, and a new set of subjects according to the established scheme duly prescribed. But the cultural implications of the system of individual opportunity had penetrated to the ranks of the crafts. Ghiberti *rejects* the official proposal of the Church because he, Lorenzo Ghiberti, through the independent vision and choice of his own personality has conceived a different arrangement which he prefers. Ten large panels contain elaborately developed representations of Biblical subjects, starting with Creation and Original Sin at the upper left, Cain and Abel, a series of Old Testament prophets and the Presentation in the Temple in the lower right.

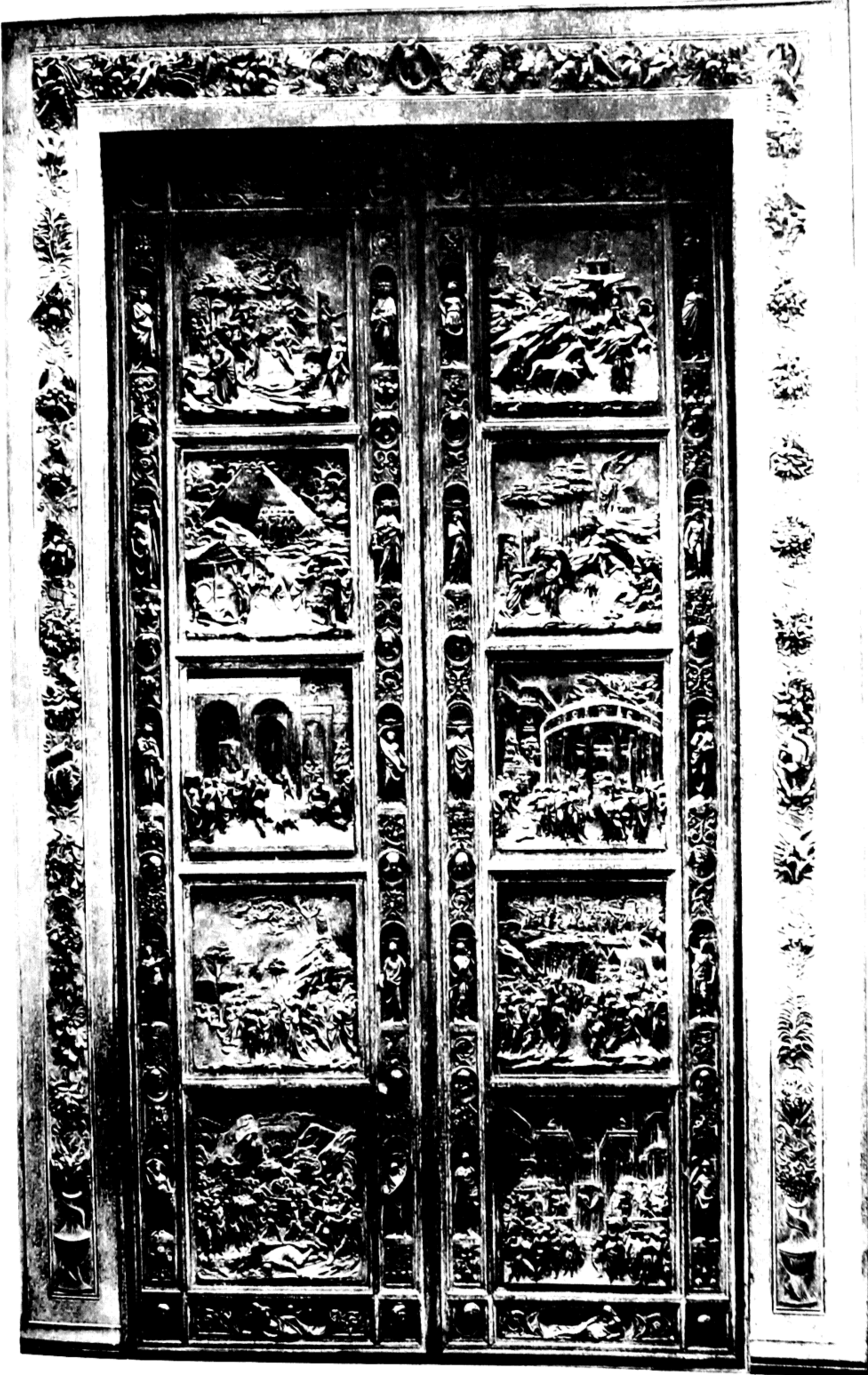


PLATE LXII. (a) Cain and Abel and (b) David and the Philistines, from the east doors of the Baptistery, Florence, by Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378–1455). Bronze; 1425–1452.

In these skillful and ambitious compositions Ghiberti has laid aside all but the least traces of earlier Gothic formality, and like the painters of his time in whose art he was also trained, he has become a true fifteenth-century seeker after knowledge. His particular preoccupation is perspective. He seeks to learn the principles and means whereby he can suggest depth in his compositions, not just the depth in which his figures move about but the space of their entire environment, enveloping them, extending the vast distances to the horizon or enclosing hills. He carries the new and popular style called “pictorial relief” virtually as far as it can go and still maintain sculptural quality.

Did this new form arise just because the thought of representing deep space occurred accidentally to Ghiberti, whose lead others followed like sheep? Or was it simply an extension of the new realism, demanding that representation in art include an object’s environment? To a degree it was undoubtedly this, but another consideration was also involved. The man of the Renaissance no longer functioned in respect to one particular and very limited environment like the serf on the manorial estate. Though actual travel was of course confined to a limited number of people, the merchant or craftsman through his workaday occupation developed a world-wide perspective as he encountered materials and made contacts involving distant regions: Cordovan leather, Damascus steel, Russian bristles, Brussels lace, Persian rugs, banking operations via Antwerp. It was the spaces of his market grown almost to world-wide proportions that stimulated the imagination of the fifteenth-century artist in his endeavor to develop vast perspectives in the backgrounds of his compositions, just as the First World War stimulated American interest in European life.



PLATE LXIII. St. John the Evangelist, by Donatello (1386–1466). Florence,
Cathedral of Santa Maria dei Fiore. Marble; *ca.* 1410

There is a troubled alertness, as of a man about to speak his mind on some matter of great concern, in the majestic head of this colossal marble St. John originally placed on the facade of the Cathedral in Florence. It is one of the earliest works by Donatello, leading Florentine sculptor of the fifteenth century, and clearly conveys foreboding of terrible destruction, which John saw in his vision on Mount Patmos. This attempt to show the spirit or thought as well as the form of the subject reflects the new individualism of the Renaissance; the readiness to speak out is particularly Florentine.

Probably the most jealously republican city in Italy at the time, Florence had been incessantly in turmoil because of opposition by the populace, in particular the *Ciompi* or “lesser guilds” mostly of the textile industry, to attempts at repression by the hereditary nobility. It was through consistent support of the workingmen in these struggles that the wealthy merchant family of the Medici, newly interested in banking, rose to political popularity and power, maintaining a virtual dictatorship over the city of Florence without holding any office. For several generations they fought for the rights of the people against the older noble families, protecting them from the burden of excessive taxation which they insisted be levied more heavily against the rich. When they had finally become unchallenged rulers, however, the later scions of the Medici family ground the people down inconsiderately, even allying themselves with a foreign army to repress a briefly successful rebellion.

Donatello's father was a member of one of the contentious “lesser guilds,” and this may have influenced the son's unmistakable expression of the assertiveness of the people of Florence. Beyond the dramatic sense of personality in this early work, there is little else of the Renaissance, for the heavy, flowing folds of drapery are unmistakably in the Gothic manner, differentiated perhaps from the more nervous profusion of northern Gothic by a studied smoothness and grace in the age-old taste of Mediterranean culture.



PLATE LXIV. David with the head of Goliath, by Donatello (1386–1466).
Florence, Museo Nazionale (Bargello). Bronze; *ca.* 1435.

The youthful giant killer of the Old Testament was an ever popular hero in Florentine art, expressing the sympathy of her contentiously democratic citizenry with any people fighting oppression, and the naturalism of the fifteenth century is quite apparent in the simple direct way in which Donatello has presented the subject. It is a landmark in the development of the Renaissance, reviving the classic use of the human nude for decorative purposes as well as the use of free-standing sculpture as sculpture rather than as a devotional or didactic instrumentality. But unlike the later, studied imitations of classic style, a work such as this could never be confused or identified with a classic prototype. The fifteenth-century sculptor followed the classic only in a general recognition of the beauty and importance of Man in carefully studied and as far as possible gracefully arranged representations of human form; whereas the later sculptors attempted to follow the very means by which the classic artist achieved his objective—the canons of proportion, patterns of anatomy, facial types, and other academically prescribed features. Although classic literature had been widely studied, classic art was not known to anywhere near the same extent during the fifteenth century. The worldliness and humanity of the ancients were simply used as a guide and inspiration, which the early Renaissance sculptor followed according to his own impulses.

Donatello showed his interest in the study of classic sculpture during the temporary eclipse and exile of Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464), in 1433. He left Florence with the Medici following as was customary in political defeats of the day but, instead of remaining with them, made a visit to Rome, his second, to study what ancient sculpture was visible aboveground. Cosimo was recalled a year later and murdered or exiled all opponents of the unofficial but despotic Medici rule. A merchant and banker greatly concerned with the success of his enterprises, Cosimo de' Medici was also a generous patron of the arts and firm supporter of the new humanism, purchasing many Greek and Latin manuscripts for study by the scholars he supported at his brilliant court, welcoming Greek refugees from Constantinople to assist in revealing the wonders of ancient Greek literature, and patronizing the leading painters, sculptors, and architects of Florence.



PLATE LXV. Equestrian statue of Erasmo da Narni, called Gattamelata
(d. 1443), by Donatello (1386–1466). Padua. Bronze; 1443–1453.

The free-standing equestrian figure honoring a political or military leader, another relatively common subject of classic art, was also revived by Donatello. Erasmo da Narni, known by the nickname of Gattamelata, died at Padua in 1443, the year of Donatello's arrival there on invitation to work for the Church of St. Anthony. Apparently more capable and developed than the savage run of *condottieri* who figured so largely in the turbulent politics of the Italian age of cities, he had won several important victories for his employer, the Republic of Venice, in whose service he died of an ailment contracted in a severe winter campaign.

From the beginning of the thirteenth to the end of the fifteenth century armed companies of mercenary soldiers in the service of a single leader who had no other standing in the community, fought for any ruler or city that would pay their hire. These "free companies" were more important in the history of Italy than elsewhere, and the leaders often rose to positions of prominence by seizing power from their employers or by receiving a feudal grant in payment of their services. Deeds of treachery and rapine were freely committed by these groups originally composed of and led by adventurers from outside the country. Gradually the leadership was taken over by Italians and, because of the fact that the men had no interest in fighting other than their pay and the enemy of today might be the brother-in-arms of tomorrow, these companies, well disciplined internally and skillful in strategy, developed elaborate and showy techniques of warfare which were virtually bloodless, in contrast to the ferocity they showed against defenseless citizens. Some battles lasted for hours without a single man's being wounded.

Gattamelata was a true leader and statesman, capable of restraint and diplomacy as well as of strategy and military force. Having regained several provinces, the signory considered the Republic to be greatly in his debt and voted to erect a commemorative statue in the piazza before the church that held his mortal remains. Donatello set up a large workshop in Padua with many assistants and for ten years worked on the great altar for the Church of St. Anthony, the equestrian statue of Gattamelata, and commissions for near-by towns.



PLATE LXVI. (a) Detail, head of David. Florence, Museo Nazionale (Bargello). Bronze; *ca.* 1435. (b) Detail, head of Gattamelata. Padua. Bronze; 1443–1453. By Donatello (1386–1466).

Donatello shows his mastery of craftsmanship and expression of personality in these heads of the two previously discussed works, done in a naturalistic style, which derives force from a striking simplicity and economy of detail. Though the body of the young David is very simply modeled, the characteristics of youth are accurately suggested, and the twisted strands of hair parallel the simple curve of jaw and cheek to make for a suave and ingratiating sense of design. The expression of pride mixed with self-conscious restraint, and perhaps a suggestion of dawning realization of life's seriousness, is conveyed in a brilliant manner and bespeaks the sculptor's interest in personality. The quiet but firm dignity of Gattamelata's rugged head likewise indicates Donatello's feeling for the kind of person his subject was. Here is clearly a man capable of using diplomacy and persuasion as well as tactical sagacity and personal vigor, all of which history credits to Venice's honored *condottiere*.

Complete assurance and mastery are felt in every detail of these works, skillfully executed in bronze by the so-called *cire-perdue* or lost-wax method. Bronzes above the size of statuettes can be cast only as hollow shells about three-eighths of an inch thick. A layer of wax of that thickness is applied to the surface of the original clay model, around which an elaborate mold of many small pieces is built up, with ducts to permit the flow of entering metal and escaping air. The whole is first baked for a considerable time to permit all of the wax to run out. Molten bronze is poured in to replace it, forming a thin shell between the mold and core which are then removed. The entire surface must finally be carefully tooled and polished, and imperfections corrected. The same process was used in ancient times and is used today, though a few of the steps are now accomplished more easily with modern science and machinery.



PLATE LXVII. (a) Youthful St. John the Baptist; Florence, Museo Nazionale (Bargello). Stone; *ca.* 1450. (b) Aged St. John the Baptist; Siena Cathedral. Bronze; 1457. By Donatello (1386–1466).

As the precursor of Christ in the Romanesque period, and as intercessor with Christ for the salvation of human souls in the Gothic period, John the Baptist was one of the most important of the Apostles in the medieval Church. His fiery personality seems to have attracted Donatello who made numerous studies of the Saint at various ages from childhood to old age, in which the psychological interpretations range from a delicate sensitivity to the extreme almost of madness in the Siena bronze. The tense, virtually neurotic, and emaciated portrait of St. John's young manhood suggests that Donatello was subtly evaluating the asceticism preached by the Baptist as an aberration in the light of the new Renaissance interest in Man and the graceful perfection of his life on earth.

The Renaissance was nothing if it was not a challenge to some of the firmest tenets of Catholicism, nevertheless the power of the Church rode out the storm by a complex and devious course. For a time, however, spiritual domination was completely lost except for the continued devotion of the common people. Secularization of the Papacy in the hands of descendants of the great families of Italy who engaged freely and often outrageously in the political machinations of the day, the sale of indulgences, and other abuses on the one hand, and sincere cultural interest in the pagan humanism on the other, which some of the popes actually favored to the extent of restoring classic ruins and cultivating the graces of worldly life, alike caused widespread skepticism.

The doughty Florentine sculptor, who once smashed a portrait he had made when the purchaser haggled over the price, may have been asserting his own skeptical criticism of past interpretation of Holy Writ in these works for the Mother Church herself. The position he seems to take is the Renaissance belief in the dignity of Man and his sovereignty in the world, which orthodox Catholicism had denied for over a thousand years; the means he takes to express it, by a skillful study of personal psychology, shows the growing interest in individual personality.



PLATE LXVIII. (a) Assumption of the Virgin, relief from the tomb of Cardinal Rinaldo Brancacci (*d.* 1427). Naples, Church of Sant'Angelo a Nilo. Bronze, executed at Pisa; 1427. (b) and (c) Dancing angels, relief from the Cantoria (Singing Gallery); Florence, Cathedral of Santa Maria dei Fiore. Marble; 1433–1440 (intermittently). By Donatello (1386–1466).

Though it is true that great art expresses deeply and exhaustively the cultural situation in relation to which it is created, one must not look for what the scientists call a “one-to-one” correspondence with the most obvious circumstances of a given work. The fact that Donatello created the tomb of Cardinal Brancacci does not mean that he was a man of outstanding importance. Rinaldo Brancacci (*d.* 1427), was a wealthy member of an old Neapolitan family, probably sincere and capable but not extraordinary, who rose above others and is remembered today because he seems to have known the “right people.” He was raised to the cardinalate by Urban VI (1318–1389) also from Naples, when that worthy so enraged the College of Cardinals by his drastic reforms of the higher clergy that they canceled his elevation. The new pope they elected took up residence at Avignon during the Great Schism which divided the western Church for fifty years. Urban appointed his own College of Cardinals including Brancacci. A tomb by the leading sculptor of the day was ordered for him by Cosimo de’ Medici, whom he had made executor of his estate. These historically unimportant people occasionally immortalized by accident in the work of a great artist, like the “Unknown Soldiers” of the First World War, remind us that the brilliant leading minority one is more apt to find portrayed functioned in relation to a great social matrix of fine, reliable, contributing, or just ordinary people without which their powers would be meaningless.

The Singing Gallery made by Donatello for the Florentine Cathedral embodies a contradiction like the criticism of Christian asceticism that can be read in his studies of *St. John the Baptist*. The gay little angels, of a type commonly used in Roman decoration as Donatello doubtless learned in his searches among the classic ruins, would certainly seem to contradict with full pagan joy of life the foreboding and self-denial of Christian teaching.

Both of these reliefs are composed strictly in relation to the plane, with no attempt whatsoever to represent deep space nor to show the figures receding beyond a uniform, relatively narrow volume of depth.

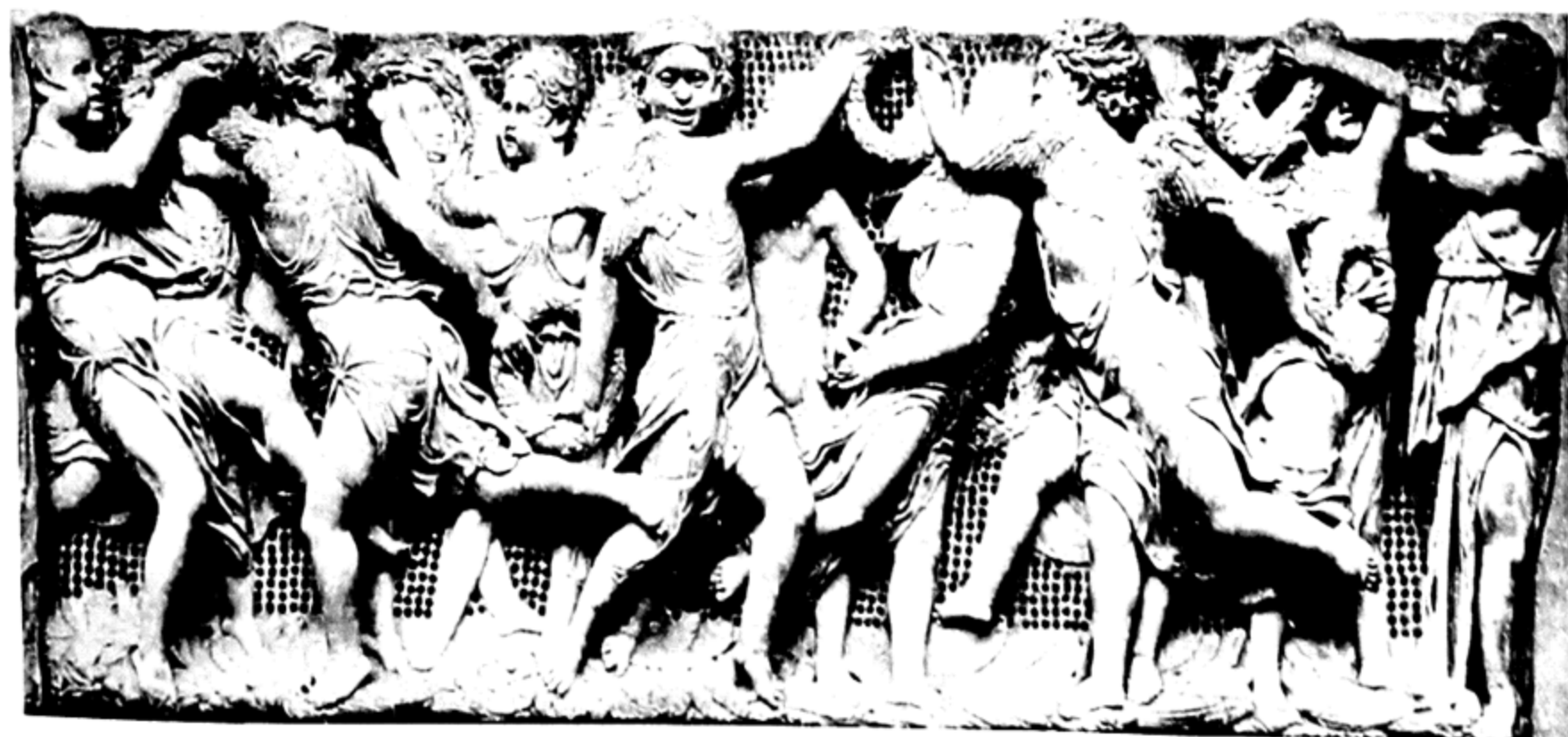


PLATE LXIX. (a) St. Anthony offering the Host to a starving mule and (b) St. Anthony finding the miser's heart to be missing, details from the high altar by Donatello (1386–1466). Padua, Church of St. Anthony. Bronze; 1446–1450.

Donatello did not confine himself, in the field of relief sculpture, to the plane type of composition. His sense of the dramatic possibilities of a subject, already seen in the sensitive psychological interpretations of individual figures, reveled in the freedom and scope admitted by the more complex compositions of pictorial relief. In his Paduan reliefs of the life of St. Anthony he filled the backgrounds with exercises in perspective such as were absorbing the painters of the time, and the lively composition of his crowds, unlike the solid banks of virtually uniform figures that appear in *quattrocento* frescoes, set a new note for painters to follow. Raphael especially, in his great Vatican murals, seems to depend greatly on these small reliefs for suggestions of ways in which individuals in a crowd may be made to differ from one another in action and character, to enliven and give it a sense of dramatic reality, without destroying its formal unity.

St. Anthony was a leader of the Franciscan order formed in the great religious revival of the Romanesque period and devoted to living the life of Christ as an act of faith and charity. Owning nothing, going about the country in pairs with “. . . neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses . . . neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves” (Matt. 10: 7–10), the followers of St. Francis of Assisi preached the Gospel and exemplified it in their own lives, working side by side with the people in any available task, never begging except when no work was to be had “. . . for the workman is worthy of his meat.” Emphasizing the humility of Christ and the fact of his existence as a man, this regime was an early expression of the humanity that appears in the Gothic period.

A favorite subject in the Francis legend is his preaching to the birds, as an extreme gesture of humility in thus regarding even the least of God's creatures. Here St. Anthony in the same spirit offers the Host to a starving mule who miraculously kneels to receive it. Franciscan insistence on poverty presaged the criticism of worldliness and wealth in the Church that culminated in the Reformation, but the growing sense of affluence in the world at large and the rapid success of the order caused it to prosper almost in spite of itself. St. Anthony was one of the leaders of criticism from within, demanding return to the strictest principles of St. Francis's rule of poverty.

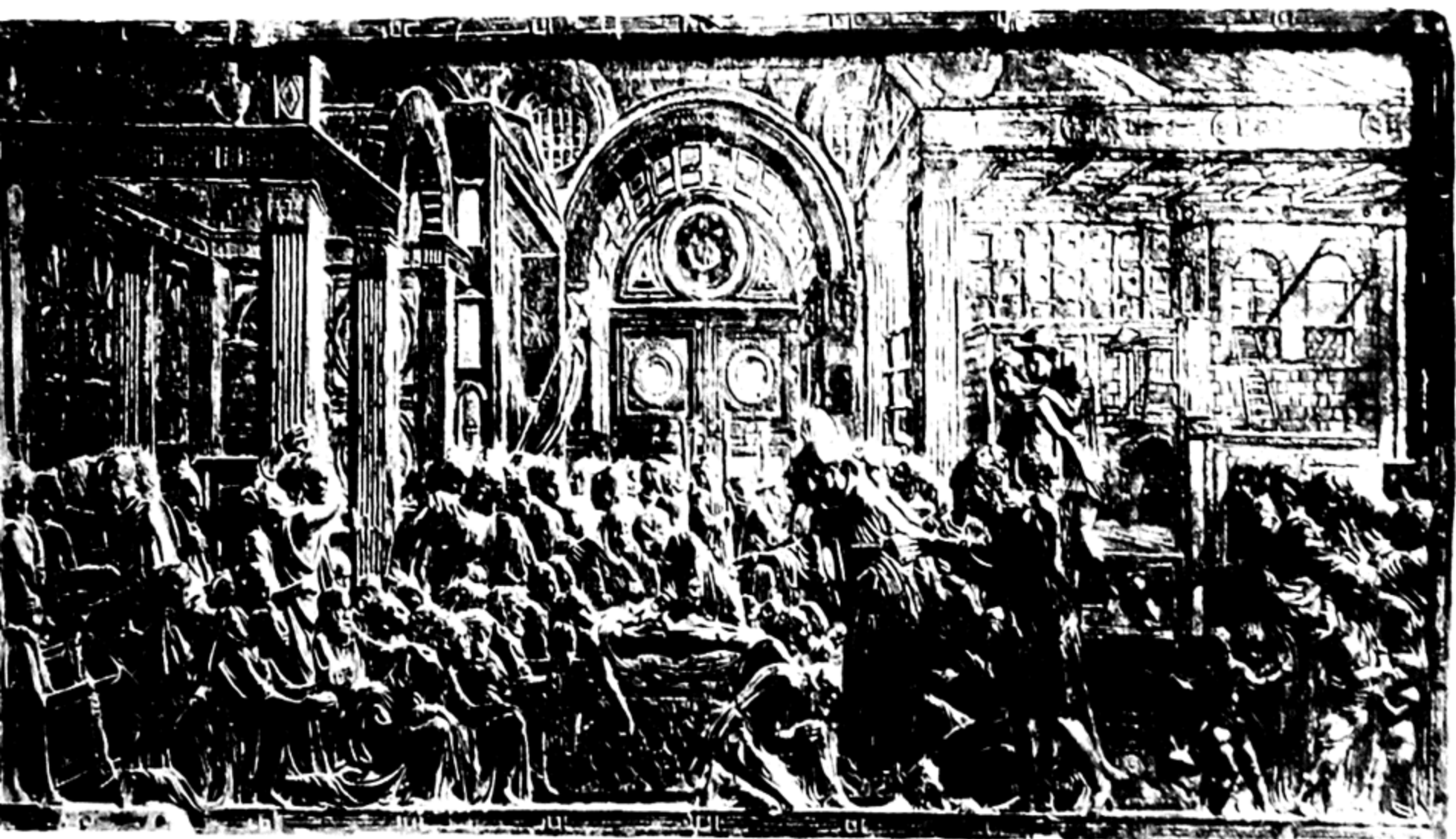
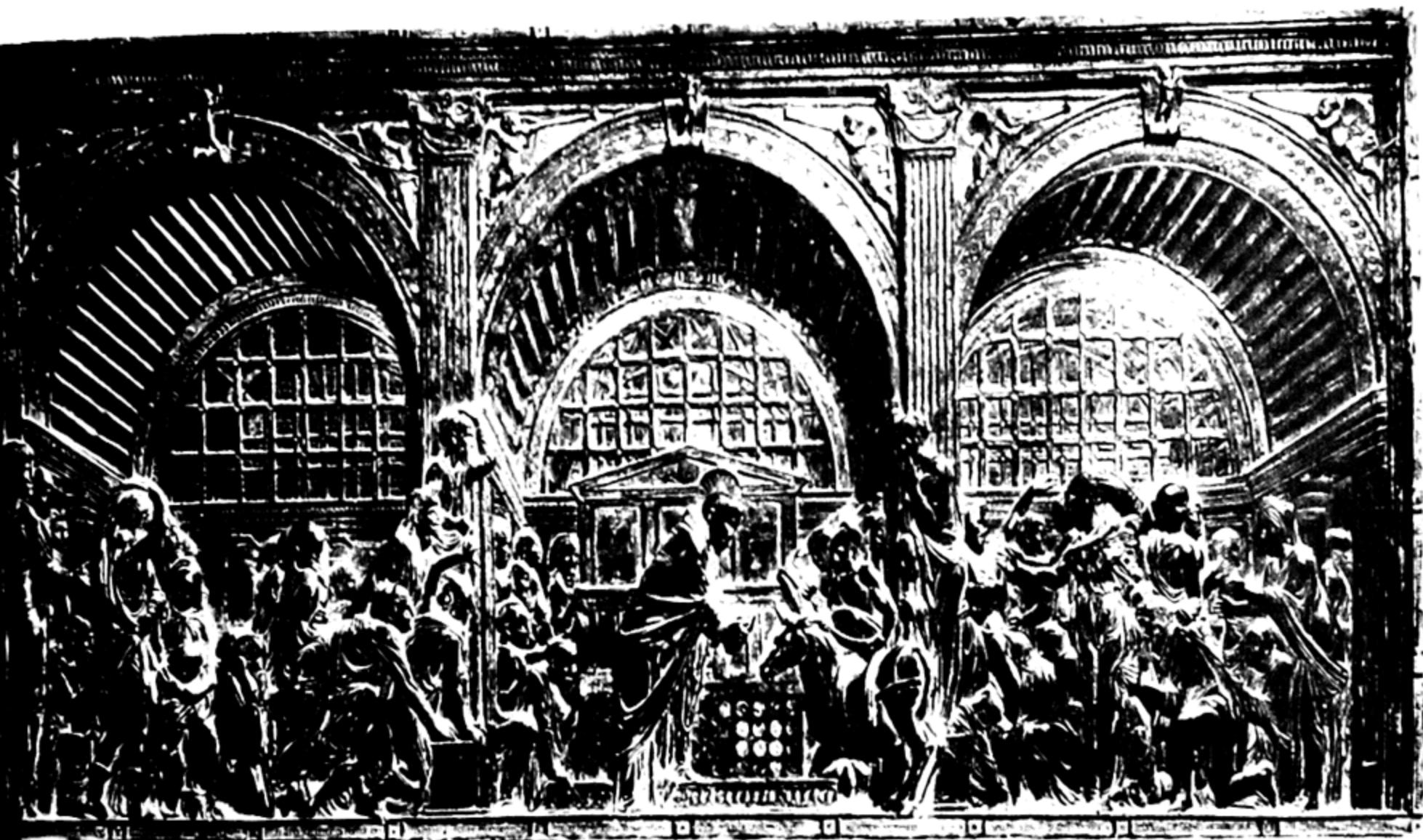


PLATE LXX. Deposition, detail of pulpit by Donatello (1386–1466). Florence, Church of San Lorenzo. Bronze; begun *ca.* 1460.

This dramatic scene of mourning over Christ's body taken from the cross is part of a pulpit in the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence, which was built by Cosimo de' Medici virtually as a family shrine. It is supposed to have been Donatello's last work, left at his death to be finished by his pupil and assistant, Bertoldo. This is the same Bertoldo who in his old age was placed in charge of the collection of classic antiquities owned by the Medici as curator and instructor to the young artists of Florence who were permitted to study them. Michelangelo as a youth had his first contact with the antique in this granddaddy of all the "antique classes" in which countless generations of beginners have since been required to work from dusty casts as an introduction to the sacred mysteries of art. Bertoldo, finishing the last work of Donatello and launching the budding genius of Michelangelo, symbolizes the process of growth in cultural tradition as one generation builds on the heritage from its predecessor.

The excited confusion of the Deposition so vividly presenting distracted sorrow is very carefully composed in the recessive, pictorial manner, although no elaborate perspective background is developed. The expressive group of the Sorrowing Mother with the lifeless body of Christ across Her knees builds up to the left and, held by the fierce figure of the helmeted soldier, the mass bevels back into the lightly modeled horses drawn with a Picasso-like delicacy. Compensating this major diagonal are the sharp obliques of the ladder, the group at the right-hand side which also recedes into faintly sketched horses, and many other forms and gestures. Each subtly contributes to the fullness, balanced movement, and strength of the whole, as the strands of warp and woof lock together with one another in a firm textile fabric. The vigor of modeling and the dramatic expression are in the best vein of the *quattrocento*, untutored by later niceties of academic classicism, unmollified by sophisticated patterns of "beauty."

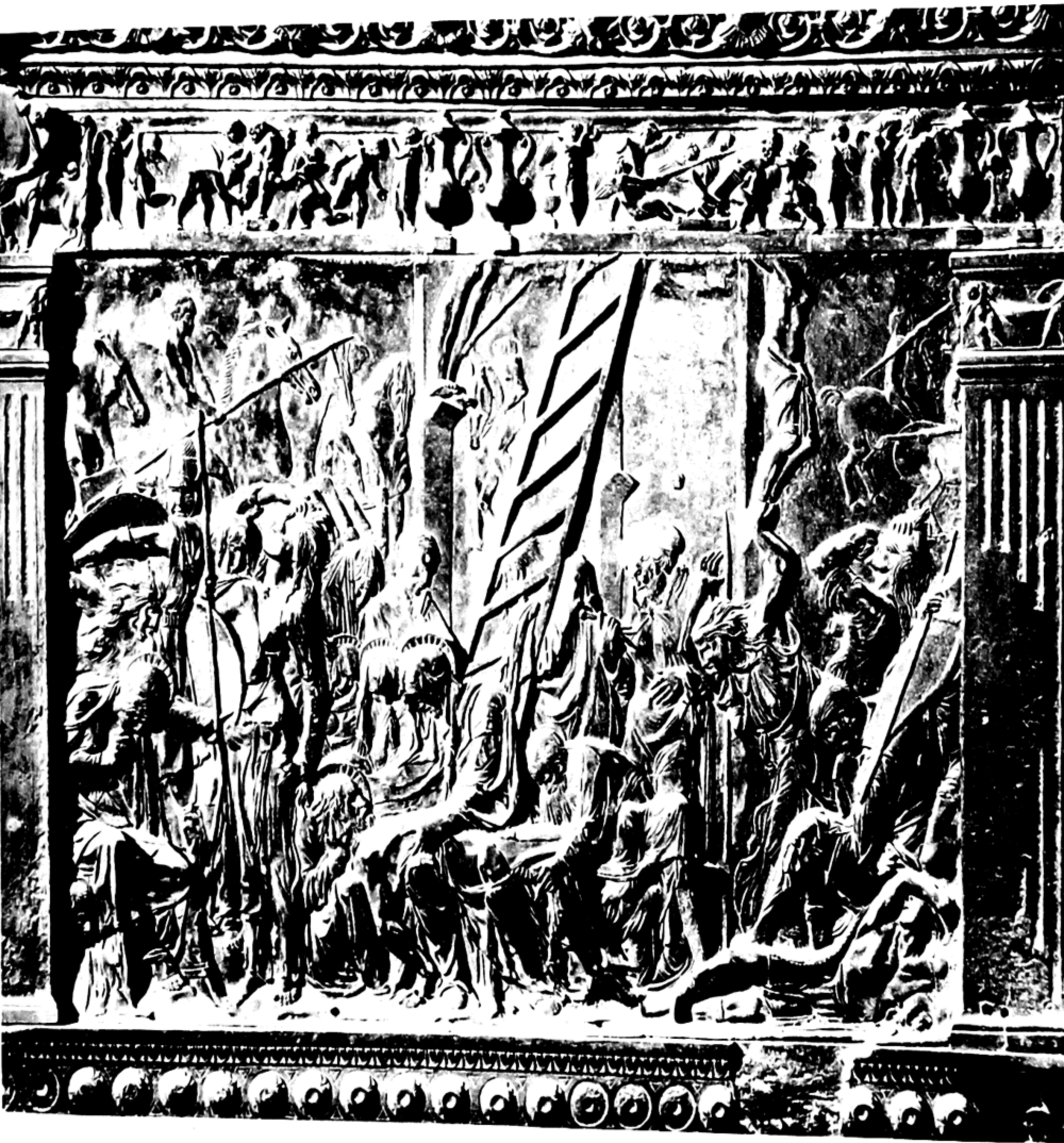


PLATE LXXI. Portrait bust of Pietro Mellini, by Benedetto da Maiano (1442–1497). Florence, Museo Nazionale (Bargello). Terra cotta; 1474.

The violence of struggle may well be less destructive than the violence of suppression. Thus it is that a period of transition is often one of broad opportunity. Weakening and impoverished nobles still trying to maintain the appearance of importance and wealth, a great new tribe of tradesmen each of whom prospered from some facet of the new commerce not yet gobbled up by stronger men, provided a various host of patrons for the artists of Florence, who enjoyed the freedom of expression of a period in which taste had not yet congealed into set patterns of sophistication. This portrait must stand for the many works that have come down to the present from the hands of a goodly number of competent artists who created skillful, charming, and often great expressions of the time in sculpture—Antonio Rossellino, Desiderio da Settignano, the painters Antonio Pollaiuolo and Andrea del Verrocchio (who like Donatello made both a bronze figure of David and an imposing equestrian statue of a Venetian *condottiere*, the fierce-looking Colleoni), and a host of others sometimes referred to as the *maestrelli* of the *quattrocento*.

Like his fellows in Italy and even in the north for whom the van Eycks and others painted meticulously detailed portraits, Pietro Mellini, prosperous Florentine merchant, required that his features be immortalized with exhaustive precision to reflect his notion of the distinctness and individuality of the role he played in his brief moment on life's stage. Even the textile designs of his costume are reproduced, with the cloak on his right shoulder turned back to show its lining.

The material of the portrait is terra cotta, which is simply baked clay, literally "earth cooked," cheap and easily worked. Such a bust could be produced in a relatively short time with much less labor than would be required for bronze, marble, or other stones. Duplicates could readily be made, lessening the cost of each, although this was not so usual with portraits as with votive and decorative figures, and prices for works of this sort were quite within the reach of a large number of people. Thus even material, as well as form and content, is found to be aptly related to the function of expressing the cultural democracy of a transitional period.



PLATE LXXII. Tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici, duke of Urbino (1492–1519), by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). Florence, Church of San Lorenzo, New Sacristy (Medici Chapel). Marble; *ca.* 1524–1532.

With the dawn of the sixteenth century, known as the High Renaissance or the Golden Age of Italian art, a new sun arose on the horizon of sculpture for the greater glory of dukes and popes—the world-famous Michelangelo Buonarroti. There was another side to the brilliance of the age and, like many others of his day, one Ludovico Buonarroti, though born to an old Florentine family, could hardly live on the meager income from his ancestral estate. Nevertheless he boasted that he had never augmented it by stooping to engage in trade or craft, and opposed the desire of his second son, Michelangelo, to train as an artist; but the boy's fierce will prevailed over his father's negative pride. Such conflict constantly embittered the great sculptor's life, beset by false and artificial standards, which grew as the turbulent vitality of the *quattrocento* congealed into the pattern of despotic elegance of succeeding centuries. Concentrations of power became so great that the grasping lives of the rulers no less than those about them were warped in its ruthless and arbitrary exercise.

The unwholesome picture was varnished over with a fine gloss of rich and elegant Renaissance "culture," the pretense at fabricating the long dead life of the ancients being substituted for a literal expression of the current pattern, too hideously inhuman to admit of any dignified formulation. Lorenzo the Magnificent (1449–1492), skillful diplomat, poet, and writer of real importance in restoring literary favor to the Italian language in preference to the precious use of Greek and Latin, was the last of the great figures in whom ruthless force was to a degree a creative instrument, and personal license attributable to an indomitable lust for life. Michelangelo had met him before he died in 1492, but only as a youth studying the classical sculpture in the Medici gardens.

In 1518 Michelangelo abandoned plans for a great new façade for the Church of San Lorenzo built in the previous century by Cosimo de' Medici, in disgust at difficulties with the new Florentine quarries, which he was requested to use "for reasons of state," instead of the time-honored source for marble at Carrara. When Cardinal Giulio de' Medici became Pope Clement VII, he ordered a great new sacristy for the same church as a mortuary chapel for the family, but it finally received only two unimportant members then recently deceased: Lorenzo, duke of Urbino, for whom Michelangelo made this tomb, and Giuliano, duke of Nemours, for whom he made one like it.

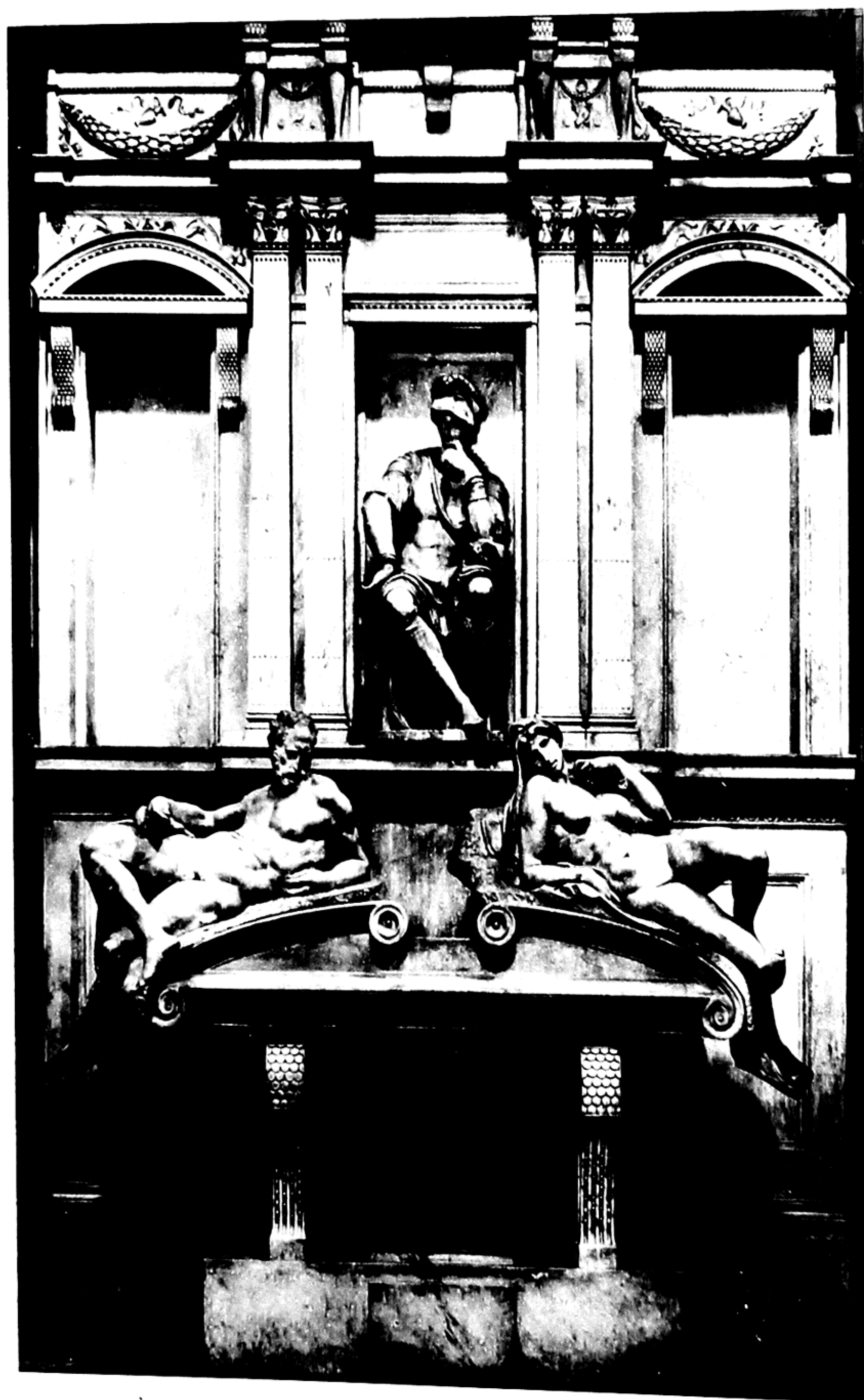


PLATE LXXIII. (a) Dawn, detail from the tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici (Plate LXXII). (b) Day, detail from the tomb of Giuliano de' Medici (1479–1516). Florence, Church of San Lorenzo, New Sacristy (Medici Chapel). Marble; *ca.* 1524–1532. By Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564).

Two powerful nudes, one male one female, rest on the lids of each of the sarcophagi of the two similarly composed tombs in Michelangelo's Medici Chapel. Those on the tomb of Lorenzo are the drowsy and languid figures personifying *Dawn* and *Twilight*; on Giuliano's tomb are *Night*, exhausted and asleep, and *Day*, his muscular figure contorted and tense as his rough-hewn head stares with unmistakable anxiety out over his shoulder. Like Roman river gods except for their expression of a psychological mood, these abstract personifications are in the then current mode of classic imitation, attempting the creation of an artificial grandeur with the authority of the illustrious past to awe the weak and lend a concocted dignity to the ruthless rule of the strong. The deceased are not even represented by realistic portraits but by "idealizations," in which Giuliano is represented as a man of action with an alert pose and sharp outward glance; Lorenzo as the thinker, chin in hand, immobilized in deep revery.

Perhaps because of constant interruption due to annoyances and conflicting requests of his patrons, the tombs were never completed as Michelangelo intended them, with additional figures at the sides below the sarcophagi and in the niches above. Serious political strife also intervened. When the imperial army of Charles V besieged Rome in 1527, the Florentine citizens took the opportunity of ousting the Medici and again setting up a republic. But Pope Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici) soon came to terms with his enemy and together they set out to restore the family's power over the people of Florence. The city prepared for a siege in which Michelangelo as an architect was placed in charge of defense construction, planning works of great military value. In spite of true republican bravery against odds, Florence was soon defeated, partly through the treachery of its military commander. Michelangelo was spared in the terror of the restoration, but he soon moved to Rome, leaving his work incomplete or in the hands of assistants, perhaps because of humiliation due to his temporary desertion in the midst of preparations when he was thrown into panic fear by rumors of treachery.

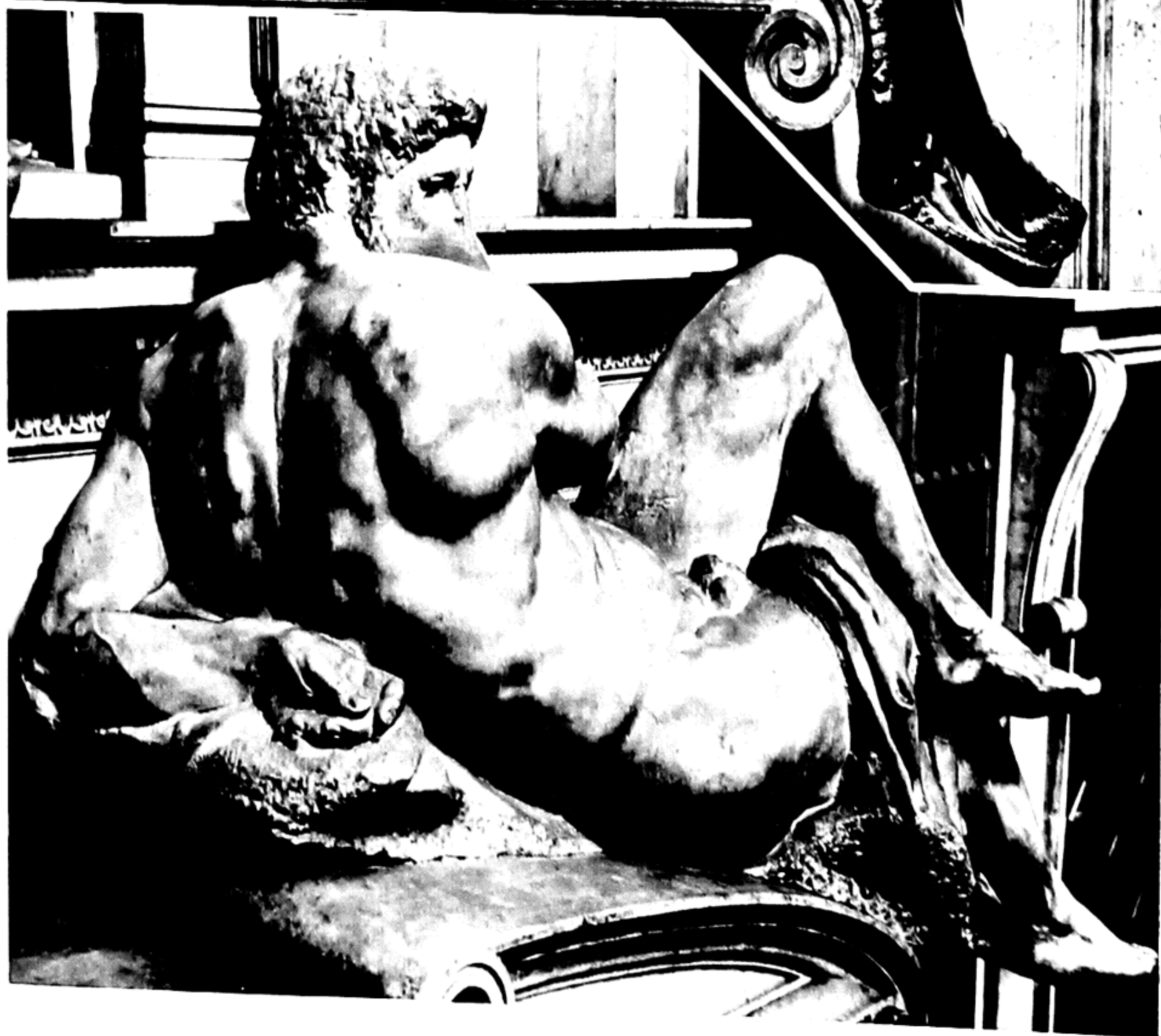
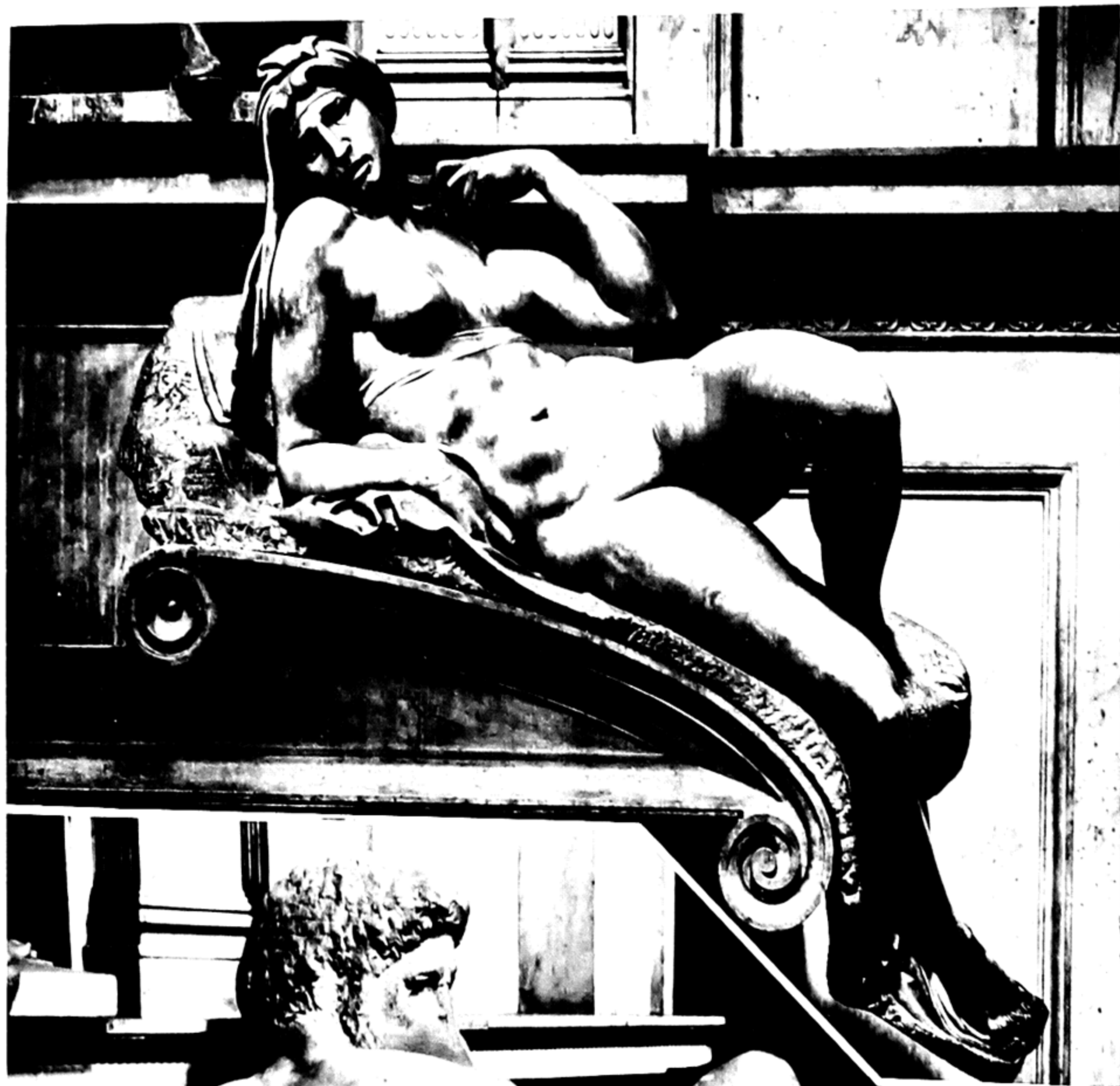


PLATE LXXIV. Moses, detail from the tomb of Pope Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere, 1443–1513), by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). Rome, Church of San Pietro in Vincoli. Marble; *ca.* 1513–1516.

One of the most notable relationships of artist and patron was that of Michelangelo with the energetic and irascible Pope Julius II, whose spirit seemed to attract the equally volatile personality of the great artist. An excellent governor of the Papal States and a conscientious Pope, Julius nevertheless had overweening ambitions for the increase of the Church's worldly domain. His intrigue and alliances with foreign powers against enemies at home led to Italy's again becoming the battlefield of Europe and her virtual subjection by Hapsburg Spain, leader of the Holy Roman Empire.

An active patron of the arts and letters, Julius first commanded the services of Michelangelo in 1505, ordering a great tomb, which was the most ambitious of all of the master's never-to-be-accomplished schemes. At the suggestion of the Vatican's chief architect, Bramante, Julius interrupted this work almost immediately, commissioning Michelangelo to paint the Sistine ceiling over his protest that he was not equipped to do the job. He was convinced that the suggestion, made during his absence while selecting marble at Carrara for Julius's tomb, had been based on expectations of failure, which would reflect credit on Bramante's nephew Raphael, at work near by on his famous Vatican murals. Fully as complex as any of his sculptural projects, it was the only one of his great plans ever finished according to his original intentions; but, still on the defensive, he signed it "Michelangelo, Sculptor."

During Michelangelo's lifetime, the contract with Julius's heirs for the elaborate structure had several times been reduced. After his death, the tomb was set up in a compromise arrangement with the majestic figure of Moses, completed many years before and originally intended for a minor position, as the central feature. The world has never ceased to marvel at the powerful conception of the lawgiver, irate at the heresies of the Israelites during his absence on Mt. Sinai. A triumph of dramatic expression, this overlife-sized figure also achieves tremendous plastic monumentality and an active circulation of design throughout the total volume of space, carrying the two basic elements of the sculptural medium to a remarkably high point of simultaneous development.



PLATE LXXV. Slaves, originally intended for the tomb of Pope Julius II, Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). (a) and (d) unfinished; Florence, Accademia. (b) and (c) finished; Paris, Louvre. Marble; *ca.* 1513–1516.

Michelangelo's career was essentially tragic, his whole life a struggle against irrelevant obstacles from without and inescapable confusions within. These painfully contorted giants, originally included in the designs for Julius's tomb, may well be said to embody the lifelong tension in his personality, for though they were planned, dozens of them, virtually as minor architectural adornment (so great was the complexity of the original plan), they seem to have attracted the master's initial enthusiasm. Probably they were meant to represent the fine arts struggling in hardship or grief at the death of their great patron, the incumbent of the tomb.

There can be little question of Michelangelo's supreme power as a sculptor and artist in respect of technical control and aesthetic vitality. Several generations of continuous and active cultural production under generous and well-informed patronage provided the background, as in other "golden ages," for the brilliant figures of the sixteenth century—Leonardo, Raphael, Titian, and others. In the fifteenth century, classical studies and naturalistic experimentation had produced widespread consciousness of the new art and considerable knowledge of its techniques, and Michelangelo had the personal force to carry on beyond these energetic beginnings. But he could not escape buffeting from the selfish violence of his age; he could not avoid the pitfalls of its cultural sham.

From the blow he received in a youthful quarrel with a fellow student, which broke his nose and disfigured him for life, to his unhappy experience in the defense of Florence, he was constantly in the torment of physical fear. From his boyhood struggle against parental opposition in the choice of a career, through endless bickerings with proud and self-centered patrons regarding design, execution, expenses, fees, he was equally confused and upset by the false and arbitrary cultural pattern of the age. Thus the intended meaning of these great figures is confused and vague. Their manifest power arises from aesthetic vitality and poignant emotional expression. It is a tragic, almost panic confusion, a dirge of constantly frustrated humanity.

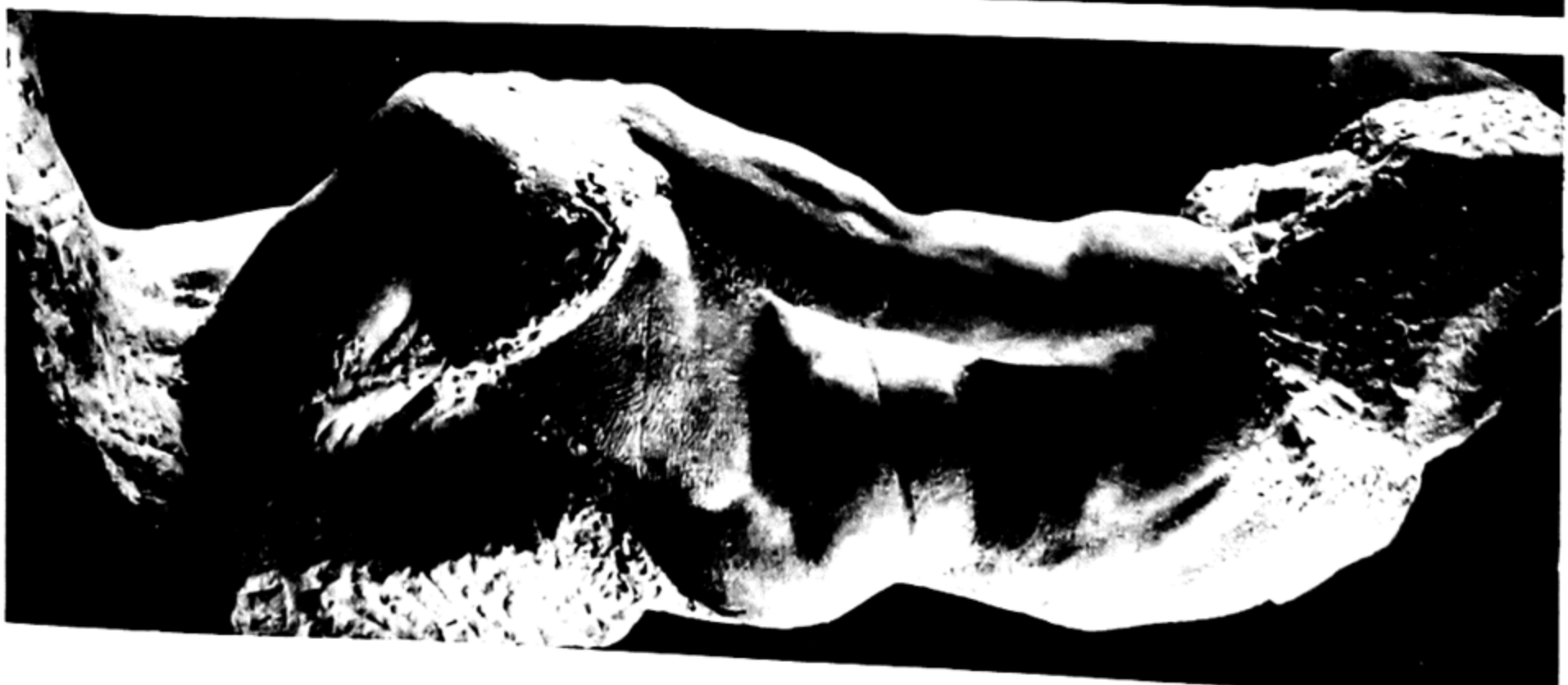
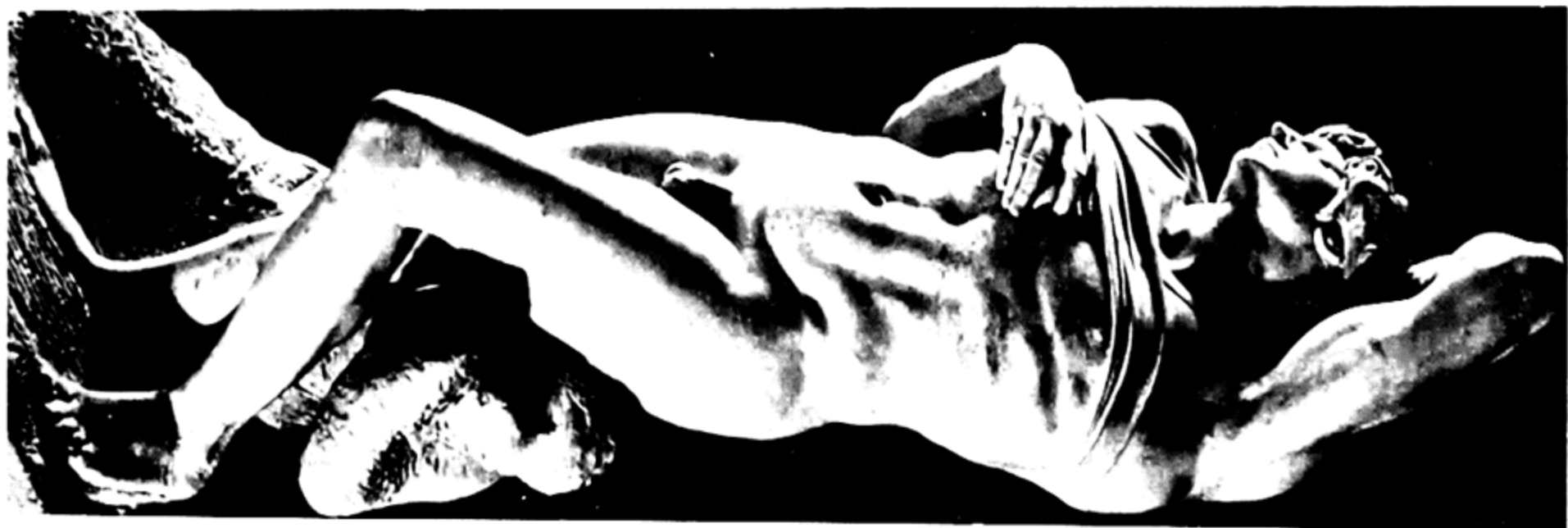
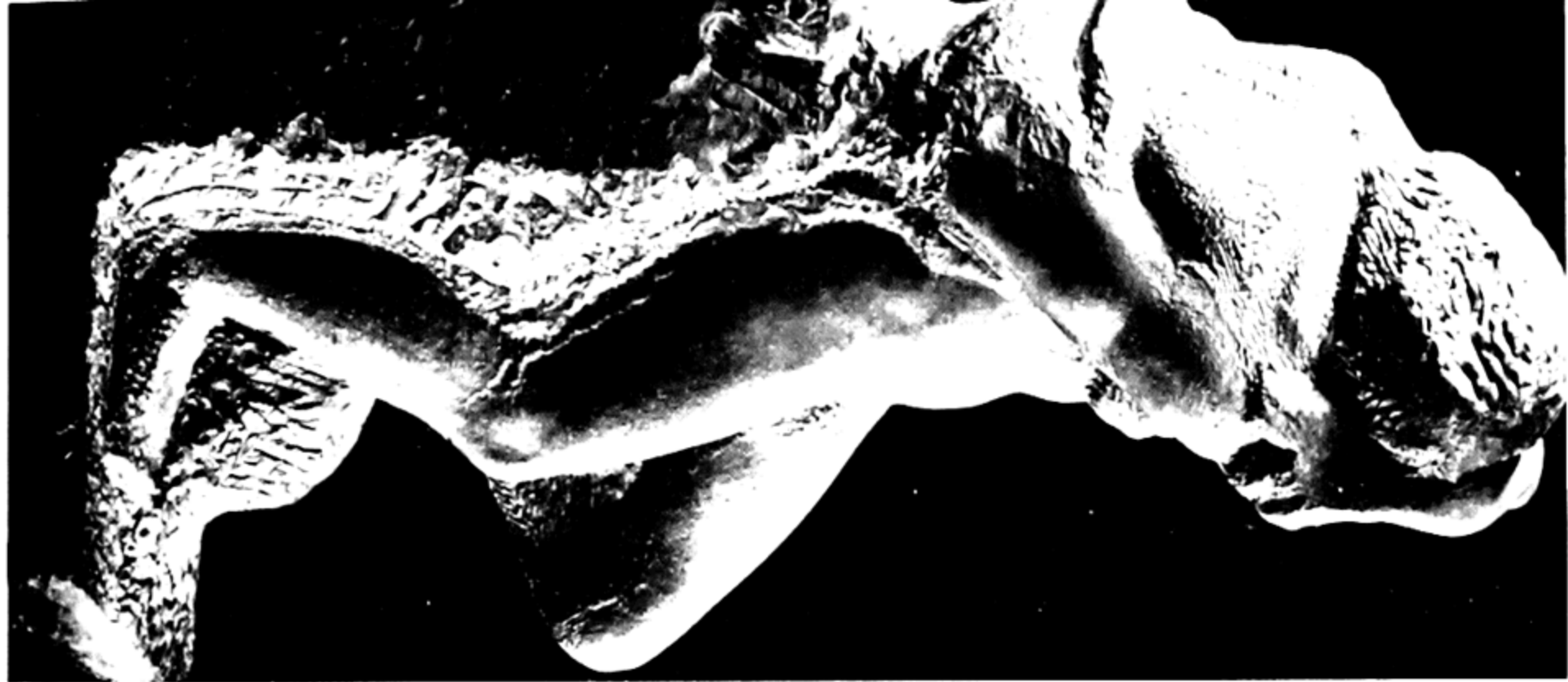


PLATE LXXVI. Madonna and Child, by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). Florence, Museo Nazionale (Bargello). Marble; *ca.* 1505.

Relief sculpture had a limited place in the grandiose compositions that Michelangelo planned for his pretentious patrons, but several pieces attest to his abilities in this medium. The charming circular composition, *Madonna and Child* in the Bargello, has been left in an unfinished state like so many others of his works, perhaps intentionally in some cases for the sensuous appeal in the contrasting patterns of roughly and finely tooled surfaces, later to be consciously sought in the so-called “Impressionistic” work of the nineteenth century. The unmistakable movement of Michelangelo’s style is shown in the composition of the figures and in the subtly recessional arrangement in which, though background is omitted, diagonal planes create movement extending into depth, which gives the simple arrangement a sense of rich and dynamic plastic activity.

Much less can be said for the intensity of religious expression in the work. Here again Michelangelo was caught up in the cultural confusion of an age professing Christianity, surrendering vast wealth for the support of the Church and the Papacy, at the same time that the patrons of culture were doing all in their power to live as pagans in a classical environment of physical and intellectual refinement. This contradiction had been resolved after a fashion by the philosophers of the Medici court who rationalized the teachings of Christ, reconciling them with revered principles of Greek philosophy, and it is said that Michelangelo with sincere devotion practiced this hybrid religion. Equally at variance with Christian ethic were the practices of the powerful Italian nobles, from large-scale political homicide to mere personal licentiousness, and these were not philosophically reconciled; but no one mentioned them unless he had a fine large army in his pay, and then the issue would be raised on other than philosophical grounds. It was the age that produced that epitome of avarice and worldly excess within the Church that is found in the career of Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503), the Spanish Rodrigo Borgia. Scandal and crime, which well deserve the infamy history has attached to his name and that of his children, Cesare and Lucrezia, prepared the way for the impending Reformation and must have offended Michelangelo’s honest religious sensibility. For his heart does not seem to be in this skillfully executed work.



PLATE LXXVII. (a) Dead Christ with the Virgin, Nicodemus, and Mary Magdalen, by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564). Florence, Cathedral of Santa Maria dei Fiore. Marble; *ca.* 1550. (b) Detail.

Michelangelo never finished this unusually powerful and complex group, saying the stone was faulty. It was later worked over to its disadvantage especially in the figure of the Magdalen, but its unmistakable force can still be seen in the compact composition and summary handling of form carved directly in the block. The aging master intended this work as his own tombstone. In spite of such preoccupation with death, his versatile creative vitality had not faltered and was still capable of adopting one more means of expression, poetry, at the end of a long and active career in which work of major importance had already been produced in three others. Many of Michelangelo's fine sonnets were devoted to the praises of the gracious Vittoria Colonna, whose friendship during the decade before her death in 1547 had been a great solace and inspiration to him. Painting and sculpture were the first skills he developed. He often said he had "sucked in a knowledge of mallets and chisels" with his mother's milk, for he had been put to nurse after the fashion of the time (an additional clue perhaps to his lifelong emotional instability), with a stonecutter's wife in the village of Settignano where sculpture was the main industry. His early training in fresco painting was not put to use for many years, but after completing the great ceiling of the Sistine Chapel he was called upon to do several other important murals, notably the *Last Judgment*. He had also occasionally practiced the then indistinguishable professions of architect and engineer in peace and war, and at the end of his life this was the field of new triumph. Among other important architectural assignments, Michelangelo was placed in charge of the work on St. Peter's, the foremost edifice in Christendom, at the death of Antonio da San Gallo, and can be credited with the design of the dome and its supports.

A great man, a great spirit, a great career, and yet the tangible realizations are on the one hand for the most part incomplete, on the other, strained in form and artificial or contradictory in subject. In these respects, however, they truly express a brilliant but misguided society, and the danger of this mixture of true and false in Michelangelo's incontestably great work is evidenced by the blusteringly empty and distorted imitations it has inspired in succeeding ages.



PLATE LXXVIII. (a) Uccelatore (birdman), bronze statuette, and
(b) Mercury, bronze, 1567. By Giovanni da Bologna (1524–1608).

During the sixteenth century the fame of Italy's brilliant Renaissance spread throughout Europe. The growing taste for regal splendor and the conscious, melodramatic elegance of the Counter Reformation encouraged artists of the entire continent to seek the secrets of classic imitation and the incontestable grace and sophistication of the Italian masters at its source. In the fire of admiration for the work of Michelangelo, a young Flemish sculptor set out for Italy to see and learn for himself. He arrived in Florence in 1553 and spent the rest of his life in Italy, mostly in that city, where he became known as Giovanni da Bologna.

The graceful *Flying Mercury* is one of the most popular sculptures in Western art and represents the increasing tendency toward spatial emphasis. The whole concept of the messenger of the gods being borne aloft on a zephyr issuing from the mouth of the wind god at the base is a negation of weight, and the sinuous, radiating limbs develop a maximum volume of space. That the simple realistic statuette of the birdman, lamp in one hand to attract the game, club or knife in the other to strike as it blindly approaches the light, should have been done by the same sculptor gives rise to a fascinating range of speculation.

Giovanni da Bologna must either have revived his early ideas of northern realistic expression occasionally for his own nostalgic enjoyment or that of commercial and political expatriates from his native land; or else there was already a market of small merchants and manufacturers, unpretentious folk concerned with everyday life, who preferred such homely, intimate objects to empty imitations of antiquity, and were willing to place themselves beyond the pale of contemporary elegant taste. A great art was developed by such patronage in the northern school of seventeenth-century Dutch painting with Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals, and others. Always stronger in painting than in sculpture, the preference for genre subjects also grew in other parts of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the prosperity and numerical increase of the relatively unpretentious middle class, enlisting the talents for example in Italy of the painters Annibale Caracci (1560–1609) and Pietro Longhi (1702–1785), with such artists as the LeNain brothers and Chardin later following the same path in France.



PLATE LXXIX. Portrait of Cardinal Scipione Borghese (1576–1633) by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680). Rome, Borghese Gallery. Marble; *ca.* 1615.

Son of a sister of Pope Paul V (Camillo Borghese, 1552–1621), Scipione Cafarelli was raised to the cardinalate by his Borghese uncle in the then current tradition of nepotism, which persisted after other high church abuses had been wiped out in the Counter Reformation, and took his mother's name in honor of his illustrious protector. Interested in the fine arts, he started construction of a villa on the Pincian Hill to house the art collections of the family, and was one of the early patrons of Bernini, a precocious youth just getting his start as sculptor and architect in Rome.

Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), born in Naples, was the son of a Tuscan sculptor. His father trained him early in drawing and modeling, and exhibited the ten-year-old boy as an infant prodigy, winning generous provisions for his education from art patrons in high church office. Responding with magnificent energy and undeniable skill, Bernini was showered throughout his long career with the richest and most important patronage. Eight successive popes received him as an intimate friend and kept him constantly at work on great sculptural and architectural commissions. He was made a Knight of the Order of Christ by Pope Gregory XV (1621–1623) and left a sizable fortune to his children at the close of his long active life.

The cardinal's portrait shows the great technical mastery of the one-time prodigy, especially in the sensitive realization of materials. The feeling of crisp silk in the collar of the garment is brilliantly achieved though it is done in hard marble. Equally convincing optical effects are seen in Bernini's bronze portraits reflecting a new realistic interest, less apparent in his monumental works, which was also brought to a high point of realization by his contemporary Velasquez (1599–1660), court painter to the Hapsburg kings of Spain. The flicker of light from fold to fold of drapery, the sense of flow from part to part in an almost Impressionistic interdependence, are parallel to the more obviously dynamic qualities of Bernini's monumental works.



PLATE LXXX. Tomb of Pope Alexander VII (Fabio Chigi, 1599–1667), by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680). Rome, Church of St. Peter. Marble and bronze; 1668–1678.

In the expansive, colorful spirit of the Counter Reformation, monumental sculptured tombs presented virtually a melodramatic interlude between Death, the occupant of the tomb, and various admiring, mourning, or otherwise contributory personages. Here the Grim Reaper, a skeleton poised above the entrance door of the tomb proper, lifts the veil of the Life Beyond, a heavy flowing drape skillfully created in vari-colored marble. An hourglass waved aloft in his bony hand indicates to the elegant and luxuriously dressed prelate the end of his earthly span, as he prays with an expression of spiritual resignation high above on a pedestal bearing his name and title. Four turbulently draped female figures vaguely personifying various aspects of terrestrial life posture about at the corners of the pyramidal grouping in sorrowful admiration. The whole is framed in a niche that emphasizes the depth and recessional movement of the composition, and the various parts are executed in richly contrasting materials—colored marbles, inlaid marble panels, and gilded bronze.

To the series of interpretations of the event of Death used throughout history in monuments at the place of interment, this style adds one so obviously artificial that the attitude of the period can only be read as an arrogant and sophisticated evasion. Such cynical persiflage reflects a general contradiction between the practice of worldly comfort and activity indulged in by the leaders of society and the Christian renunciation which they professed and preached. Nevertheless, as a work of art, regardless of social connotations, it is without question a skillful expression of the dynamic baroque style in its rich play of sensuous values—color, light, texture—active flow of design, and elaborate exploitation of depth in the movement of individual figures and the composition of the whole.

Alexander VII, Fabio Chigi, was one of those well-born princes of the Church who delighted far more in developing the elegance of his ecclesiastical setting than in arduous political duties which he left largely to the papal secretary of state. He was born in Siena of a noble family, which like so many others had sought its fortune in Rome, and was elected to the Papacy with Spanish support.



PLATE LXXXI. Chair of St. Peter, altarpiece by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680). Rome, Church of St. Peter. Marble and bronze; 1656–1665.

No sooner had Alexander VII ascended the papal throne than he called the ingenious and indefatigable Bernini and sought new decorative wonders to create. One of the projects they hit upon was an altar for the east arm of the Latin cross plan of St. Peter's opposite the entrance at the far end of the main axis, the principal altar, normally in that position, being in the center under the dome. Thus the recessional implication of the nave, which baroque architects had added to the Greek cross plan of Bramante and Michelangelo, would be given a proper objective. Sculptured decoration behind the altar was to rise the entire height of the building, skillfully using the window to provide a sense of heavenly illumination about the dove of the Holy Ghost. The composition frames the *Chair of St. Peter* in a design of gigantic scale, the bronze figures of the four doctors of the Church at the base being approximately twenty feet high.

The work is a true marvel in the new style of Jesuitical hypnotism. Overpowering in scale, absorbing in its incessant movement, and above all impeccably skillful in the advancing and receding arrangement of carefully but daringly proportioned forms large and small, it presents the sensuous glory of religious setting that is characteristic of the great new churches constructed by the Society of Jesus. Organized on lines of actual military authority for active opposition to the Reformation on all fronts, the Jesuit order seemed to favor countering the critical, mystically abstract logic and severity of early Protestantism with rich, generous, ingratiating, and overwhelmingly emotional encouragement to religious surrender. Architecture, painting, music, processional ceremony, costume, and other appurtenances were developed to the most glorious degree attainable by this new effort to maintain world-wide authority in religion. Supreme artist and innovator in this luxurious taste, Bernini had a tremendous influence on the future of ecclesiastical decoration, and the *Chair of St. Peter* stands as a prototype and epitome of a widespread trend, which survives to the present day.



PLATE LXXXII. Portrait bust of Louis XIV, King of France (1638–1715),
by Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680). Versailles, Royal Palace.
Marble; 1665.

Bernini could even infuse solid marble in the simple composition of a portrait bust with intense, restless activity. The swirling pattern of lacily carved hair, the dramatic royal gesture, and the sweep of the incredibly skillful drapery across the chest show this portrait's unmistakable kinship with the great involved composition of the *Chair of St. Peter*. The influence of Bernini's dynamic style was borne by the vogue of Italian art and culture throughout Europe, spreading to the courts of the new "absolute monarchs," and his services were sought even outside his own country. Turning down the invitation of a cardinal ambassador to work for the king of France, he at last succumbed to the importunings of the great Colbert to work for Louis XIV on plans to remodel the Louvre. In 1665 "*il cavaliere Bernini*," as he was known after his knighthood by Pope Gregory XV, journeyed to Paris with a large retinue in a virtual triumphal procession on a princely salary. He was generously acclaimed on all sides, and the king even caused a medal to be struck commemorating his arrival in Paris, but his plans for the Louvre were never used. He created the portrait of the king and an equestrian monument, returning to Rome after eight months.

However, the influence of the aging but brilliant and unflagging virtuoso was imprinted on official and ecclesiastical French art to the time of the Revolution. French student artists journeying to Italy in ever greater numbers began to turn from the classic and the earlier masters to the absorbingly skillful, rich, and active creations of the one-time infant prodigy who worked with tireless energy for seven decades until the very year of his death. In that time the face of the Eternal City had almost completely changed by his efforts and by his influence in formulating the style of his contemporaries. Since Bernini's day the ancient past and the contemporary life of Rome have alike worn the grand and flourishing mask of baroque monumentality.



FRENCH RENAISSANCE, ROCOCO, AND NEOCLASSICISM

THE GILDED CAGE

DIVINE right of kings" was the high-sounding claim advanced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the growing need for more widely centralized authority outgrew the scope of the city-state and caused absolute power to be vested in national monarchs. As finance produced the joint-stock company, craft expanded into manufacture and trade saw opportunities for expansion in the colonies of the New World and the Far East, a broader base and a dependable state administration were needed. The commercial groups appealed to the king, who also held the only rank high enough to assert authority over the nobility. Their wanton use of hereditary power and failure to understand the significance of the new order caused constant difficulty, mainly in repeated attempts to plunder the new wealth of the enterprising townsmen. These gladly agreed to strengthen the king's power, which had been mostly nominal under feudalism, by accepting taxation to provide funds for necessary organizational, administrative, and regulatory measures. With money, he could accomplish the task by employing on salary large, efficient, and dependable standing armies and a host of civil administrators who were neither nobles nor ecclesiastics and were responsible to him alone.

Foremost in the age of cities, Germany and Italy were late in unifying their national structures, and the disunited principalities fell behind the European procession. It was France, achieving internal stability of a sort after several generations of struggle, that emerged as the leading nation of the continent and assumed a prominence in the plastic arts which has only recently been lost. This supremacy in the cultural field followed economic and political power in France for a practical and definite reason.

The most subtle device for control and subjection of the troublesome nobility in France was the creation of a large and brilliant royal court, at which the interests of

the leisured nobility were absorbed in etiquette and favor-seeking, in frivolity and dalliance. Thus they were isolated from contact with their own domains, the source of their power and possible danger should they meddle with administrative and commercial development as they sometimes did. The obvious model of ceremony and refinement was the highly cultured pattern of the Italian Renaissance court. The national court of France with the frequent stupidities and overweening ambitions of the monarch, meddling regents, mistresses, and favorites, jockeying for succession by princes of the blood, and powerful pretenders through intrigue, military adventures, and occasional murder, was no more an inspiring picture of human society than had been the operations of the Italian ruling families. It was therefore thoroughly appropriate that artificial forms of culture as a surface veneer should inspire the official art of the French court. The requirement was still a grandiose, ingratiating, and awe-inspiring front to assert the quality and dominion of the monarch and to win the attachment of those who were presumably being favored while actually they were subjected and debauched. No forthright interpretation of life would suit the situation; the glittering generalities of noble antiquity, once removed in the luxurious academic interpretations of Italy's later masters, were precisely what was needed.

Government sponsorship of academies and the manufacture of luxury products were among the concrete measures undertaken to develop the proper setting. It is significant that these actions, like most of the constructive devices in the development and administration of the French nation, were taken by the remarkable series of bourgeois ministers through whom the French kings ruled. Cardinal Richelieu, the first to recognize and enforce absolute monarchy as a conscious policy, established the French Academy in 1635. A small group of writers had agreed informally about four years earlier to meet periodically for the exchange of criticism on their respective works. When Richelieu heard of it, he formalized the organization, pensioning the members, placing royal facilities at their disposal, and committing them, in addition to their program of essays and criticism, to the creation of a dictionary, grammar, and treatises on rhetoric and poetry. Later Colbert converted a similar organization into the Academy of Sciences. A constructive purpose was at first served by these bodies, especially in the field of science, insofar as they developed precision and uniformity in a wide exchange of ideas. These efforts toward national classification of knowledge paralleled the growing tendency toward standardized organization in trade and aided the practical development of discoveries which followed release from medieval orthodoxy of thought.

It was Colbert, Louis XIV's great minister, who organized the academies of art. Discerning the value of giving France a modern industrial character, he issued stringent regulations aimed at winning foreign markets by standardized soundness of

French products, and created industries on a grand scale. Some ceased when death withdrew his protection, but the luxury industries such as silk, glass, lace, linens, tapestry, and the fine arts, continued as the basis of French superiority in the field virtually to the present time. With the counsel and under the direction of the court painter Charles LeBrun (1619–1690), Colbert established the Académie des beaux arts in 1648. To protect and regulate the study of French artists in Italy, he established the French Academy in Rome in 1677, also under LeBrun, and the same artist became the organizer and first director of the royal Gobelin factories, which originally manufactured all the furniture for the king's palaces, though now remembered principally for tapestries. The porcelain industry of Sèvres is another that was begun as a royal enterprise.

In addition to professional recognition, membership in the academy conferred social rank on an artist, officially pronouncing the superiority of his position to that of the craftsman he originally was and basically remained. It also elevated him above the less privileged social strata from which he generally sprang by admission to the frivolous circles of high society who neither wove nor span. The general significance of the academy of course was the expression of the absolute authority of the central ruler, by its extension to the realm even of cultural taste. The supremacy of the king depended on every possible device of expression and enforcement of his absolute power, which for several generations was seriously maintained to have come from God alone. An official body was necessary for the authoritative formulation of cultural patterns and standards according to the desired end, and some means must also exist for propagating the precise and narrow means of such a highly artificial expression. This was done through pronouncements, schools of instruction, exhibitions, prizes, competitions, large royal commissions, and the official accolade of membership in the academy itself for exemplary individuals. The system served inevitably to strengthen and exaggerate the concept of culture as a superficial adornment, abstract and indeed contrary to natural life, which began in the Italian Renaissance. Fulfilling a definite purpose in relation to an aspect of social growth in its time, it was at least to that extent a true expression and produced some great work in its forced and stilted idiom; but unfortunately some of the fallacies and distortions still exert an inappropriate and destructive influence on the cultural pattern of the present.

In broad outline, the course of the so-called Renaissance in France began about the time of Francis I (1494–1547) with the importation of classic decorative detail superficially applied to basically Gothic forms. Several generations of military forces had returned from the Italian campaigns of Charles VIII, Louis XII, and Francis himself, between the end of the fifteenth and the middle of the sixteenth century, with a memory of the comparative luxury, cleanliness, and monumentality of Italian cities.

Francis I invited many Italian artists and architects to the French court, putting them in charge of the design and decoration of various royal constructions and alterations.

It was not until the period of Louis XIV (1638–1715) that a Renaissance style was developed in France, as native and original as might be under the circumstances. Louis XIV practically perfected the strong centralization of the nobility at his brilliant court, for which he established the great palace and extensive royal park at Versailles. In his early years the serious, energetic, and practical monarch insisted on a style of severe classic formality, which relaxed as his long reign wore on, becoming more delicate and luxurious especially in interior decoration. This tendency increased under the dissolute, cynical, self-indulgent Louis XV (1710–1774) and his officially recognized mistresses. In particular, the clever and beautiful Mme de Pompadour, who pontificated tyrannically on all matters at the royal court from the time of her installation in 1744 to her death twenty years later, ordered a regime of increasing frivolity expressed in the light gaiety of the Rococo style. Under the virtuous, good-natured, and well-intentioned but confused Louis XVI (1754–1793) and his elegant, obstinately reactionary queen, Marie Antoinette, there was a return to a more strictly classical style of decoration, which was, however, much more delicate than that of Louis XIV.

PLATE LXXXIII. Way of the Cross, Crucifixion, and Deposition. Retable by Ligier Richier (1500–1567). Hattonchatel (Meuse). Stone, painted; 1523.

The Renaissance did not grow from the soil of the countries to the north of Italy. It was grafted onto the quite sturdy art of the late Gothic style. In their own ways both Renaissance and Gothic were realistic expressions, and the skilled craftsman of the north had no trouble in adapting his abilities to the new fashion. At first it consisted merely in adding certain superficial notes of classical decoration. Here for example the heavily clothed, realistic, painted stone figures crowd together in a dramatically expressive composition, which recalls the entire history of northern Gothic carved altarpieces, except that the conventional three-paneled arrangement is now framed in a quite insistently classic structure. The heavy classic entablature above the side wings is carried across the back of the central panel to emphasize the horizontal, and with the approximately semicircular arch in the middle, replaces the lightly soaring pointed arches of Gothic tracery. Solid piers separating the three scenes are decorated with typical Renaissance classic arabesques and more or less classic Corinthian capitals. A Latin inscription in Roman letters is spread across the emphatically horizontal base, and a couple of classical medallion portraits are worked into the spandrels to right and left of the arch for good measure.

Ligier Richier, the author of this monument, was a prominent sculptor of Lorraine. Between the Champagne and the Lower Rhine, he was in the midst of the area of some of the greatest Gothic sculpture of both France and Germany, and it is quite natural that the new foreign taste should at first make but a superficial impression on such a sturdy development of craft and expression.



PLATE LXXXIV. Christ on the Mount of Olives. Relief from an altarpiece by Germain Pilon (*ca.* 1536–1590). Paris, Louvre. Alabaster; *ca.* 1575.

The introduction of Renaissance style in the north was really promoted by those individuals who saw themselves superior to their fellows and who desired some outward formal indication, which they found in the affectation of a strange culture, not accessible to the “ordinary” run. Francis I, charmed with what he had encountered during his variously successful and disastrous military adventures in sunny Italy, decided to establish a school of art at his court in the Palace of Fontainebleau. Here artists might foregather for the study of the antique, and incidentally for the mutual development of themselves and the courtiers in those special refinements which increasingly distinguished both groups from normal, productive folk. The Italian artists Il Rosso and later Primaticcio, pupil of Correggio, were placed in charge, and many others, including the noted Benvenuto Cellini, were employed at handsome salaries to work on elaborate decorations and extensions for Fontainebleau, the Louvre, and other royal structures.

Pilon, trained by his father, a Parisian sculptor, worked at the Fontainebleau school and executed his greatest work, the tomb of Henry II and his queen Catherine de' Medici, under Primaticcio's direction. Like Richier, he is essentially a Gothic realist adding a few fashionable wrinkles to his own well-developed craft. The heavy, dynamically flowing drapery of the figures in this relief, also encountered in many other works by Pilon, are distinctly in the late Gothic style apparent for example in the *Dangolsheim Madonna* (Plate LV, *a*), and his ability to create dramatically penetrating portraits like those on the tombs of Henry II and the Cardinal de Birague are clearly a continuation of the brilliant northern tradition which began as far back as the thirteenth century in the figures from the choir at Naumburg (Plate LII).



PLATE LXXXV. (a) Apostles John and Matthew and (b) Deposition.

From a screen originally in the Church of St. Germain, Auxerre, by Jean Goujon (*ca.* 1520–*ca.* 1566). Paris, Louvre. Stone; 1544–1545.

Jean Goujon was the first French sculptor to develop a style basically influenced by Renaissance ideas that seem to be thoroughly digested. It is a style that substitutes an almost fragile delicacy for the weight and power of the best High Renaissance work of Italy, and contrasts even more with the work of antiquity in this respect. The broad and powerfully muscled frames of the male figures follow an idealized anatomical pattern in the classic manner, actually derived, however, from Michelangelo. The poses of the apostles are virtually copied from the prophets of the Sistine Ceiling, but the forceful bulk of these prototypes is not achieved.

Some knowledge of Italian Renaissance examples would be available in Goujon's day, even to those who had not visited Italy, in casts and in widely circulated engravings, and the two finished slaves made by Michelangelo for the tomb of Julius II (Plate LXXXV, *b*, *c*) were presented to Francis I about 1535 by Roberto Strozzi, member of an old Florentine family. The conventional beauty of the heads in these reliefs is reminiscent of late Hellenistic and Roman style, derived from the Greek sculptors Praxiteles and Skopas of the fourth century B.C., and the narrow folds in the simple classic costumes of the figures are modeled closely after Roman imitations of fifth-century Greek "wet drapery" (Plate XXV).



PLATE LXXXVI. (a) Water nymphs and (b) nymph of the Seine, from the Fontaine des Innocents, or Fontaine des Nymphes. By Jean Goujon (ca. 1520–ca. 1566). Paris, Cemetery (later Square) of the Innocents. Stone; 1547–1549.

Complete triumph of Renaissance over Gothic appears in these nymphs by Jean Goujon from the fountain constructed in the Cemetery of the Innocents according to plans by Pierre Lescot, noted architect of the new Louvre. A frequent collaborator with Lescot, Goujon was employed to execute most of the sculptured reliefs of nude and scantily clad figures in the classic manner. From the ancients via Italy, too, is the concept of natural and geographical personifications whereby these figures are supposed to represent streams, springs, and the River Seine, while the attenuated proportions and languidly graceful poses of the figures follow closely the Mannerist style of the early Italian Baroque which Primaticcio practiced and taught at Fontainebleau.

As France took up the Renaissance in a serious way under the tutelage of Francis I, there was some attempt to develop the literary and scholarly approach that played such an important part in the great Humanist movement in Italy. A French translation of the late Roman treatise on architecture by Vitruvius, which was the architectural bible of the Italian Renaissance, appeared in 1547 with illustrations by Goujon. The introduction indicates that he was employed on the numerous staff engaged in great royal constructions, and his name appears regularly as recipient of expenditures in the building accounts of the Louvre until 1562. This year marked the opening of the Eight Years' War, one of the bloody interludes in the fierce struggle to stamp out Protestantism in France. A Huguenot, Goujon is supposed to have been forced to flee Paris, possibly after the Duc de Guise, one of the ruthless leaders of the Catholic party, entered the city with armed forces and staged a *coup d'état* precipitating the war. It was ended by the temporary Peace of St. Germain in 1570 only to be broken two years later in the hideous massacre of St. Bartholomew.



PLATE LXXXVII. Equestrian figure of Louis XIV. Relief with surrounding decoration, by Antoine Coysevox (1640–1720). Versailles, royal palace interior. Marble, bronze, and stucco; *ca.* 1700.

A hunting lodge in the days of Louis XIII, Versailles was selected by Louis XIV as the site of a great royal palace, which became the scene of many important events in the history of France and of Europe. Begun in 1661, the royal household was moved there and the court installed in 1682. As the immediate personal surrounding of an absolute monarch whose word was divinely ordained law, the otherwise meaningless microcosm of his court offered opportunities for patronage, preference, and intrigue, but held in check the courtiers isolated from their own domains under the watchful eyes of the king's ministers. Unstinted elegance and luxury must of necessity characterize every aspect of such a ménage to express the absolute character of the central power and win adherence with charm or awe.

The elaborate sculptured decoration and rich marble and gilt of this wall on the interior of the Palace at Versailles is a sample of the affected grandeur. LeBrun awarded the commission to the sculptor Antoine Coysevox to whom he entrusted a great deal of the work at Versailles and who followed him as president of the Academy. The muscular contorted slaves seated on the curved forms beneath the oval frame are directly from Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling and the Medici tombs; the trumpet-blowing angels above and the trophies of classic armor scattered about occur repeatedly on Roman triumphal arches; and the allegorical assertion of the central panel is bombastic and artificial. Nevertheless it would be difficult to ignore the presence of this composition, with all its main figures life size or better, or even to be unimpressed; and the repeated impact of room after room, corridor after corridor, and similarly elegant acres in the great gardens and park out of doors, would inevitably convey the desired impression to almost anyone, of extensive, unparalleled, and perhaps absolute power.



PLATE LXXXVIII. (a) The ocean, by Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (1704–1778), and (b) Neptune and Amphitrite (central group), by Lambert-Sigisbert Adam (1700–1759), from the Bassin de Neptune. Versailles, gardens. Lead and bronze; 1740.

A park, covering many acres of elaborately landscaped woods and gardens, sloped away for several miles from the front of the Palace at Versailles. Its elaborate series of aquatic features included a Grand Canal 200 feet wide and a mile long on the central axis, which was covered with boats and Venetian gondolas in the time of Louis XIV, and there were also many fountains with elaborate sculptured decoration. Considerable difficulty was encountered in obtaining sufficient water for the play of the elaborate works which were introduced to rival the chateau of Louis's wealthy finance minister Fouquet at Vaux, but finally a drainage system was developed to collect water from a near-by plateau, involving 98 miles of channels, and countless vaults, pipes, and ducts beneath the surface of the gardens.

To the north of the palace an avenue with twenty-two groups of three children, each group holding a marble basin from which a jet of water rises, runs down to the Basin of Neptune. Technically skillful and well composed, the sculptured groups of languidly or melodramatically attitudinizing gods and goddesses from pagan mythology have no serious meaning whatever. They are the landmarks, the geography of the make-believe world of the *Roi Soleil*: a destination for an aimless stroll, a central focus of an idle view, a source of charming sensations of sight, of sound, and of cool summer breezes; perhaps, too, the excuse for a witty or suggestive remark.

The sculptors of these two groups were both Parisians and sons of sculptors. Lemoyne's education was curtailed when his father, who had gained some reputation and wealth by his art, lost everything in the failure of the government-sponsored enterprise of the Scotch financier, John Law. Adam, an academician and professor of the Academy, published in 1754 a collection of antique sculpture found in the ruins of Nero's Palace on the Palatine Hill in Rome. With his brothers he also worked for Frederick the Great of Prussia who was dressing up his own absolute monarchy to unify Germany, as the fame of the French court spread and Paris began to be the capital of European art.

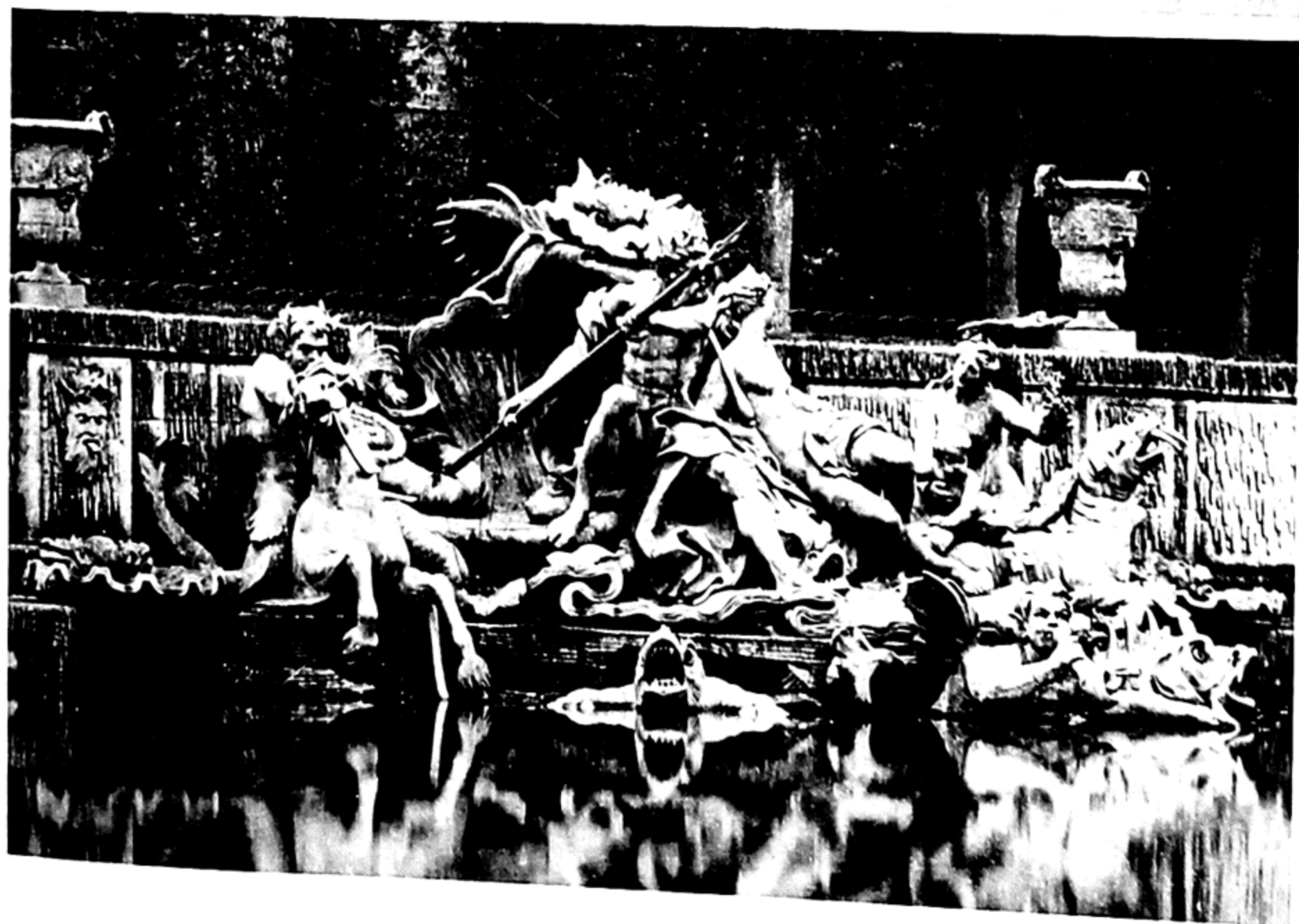
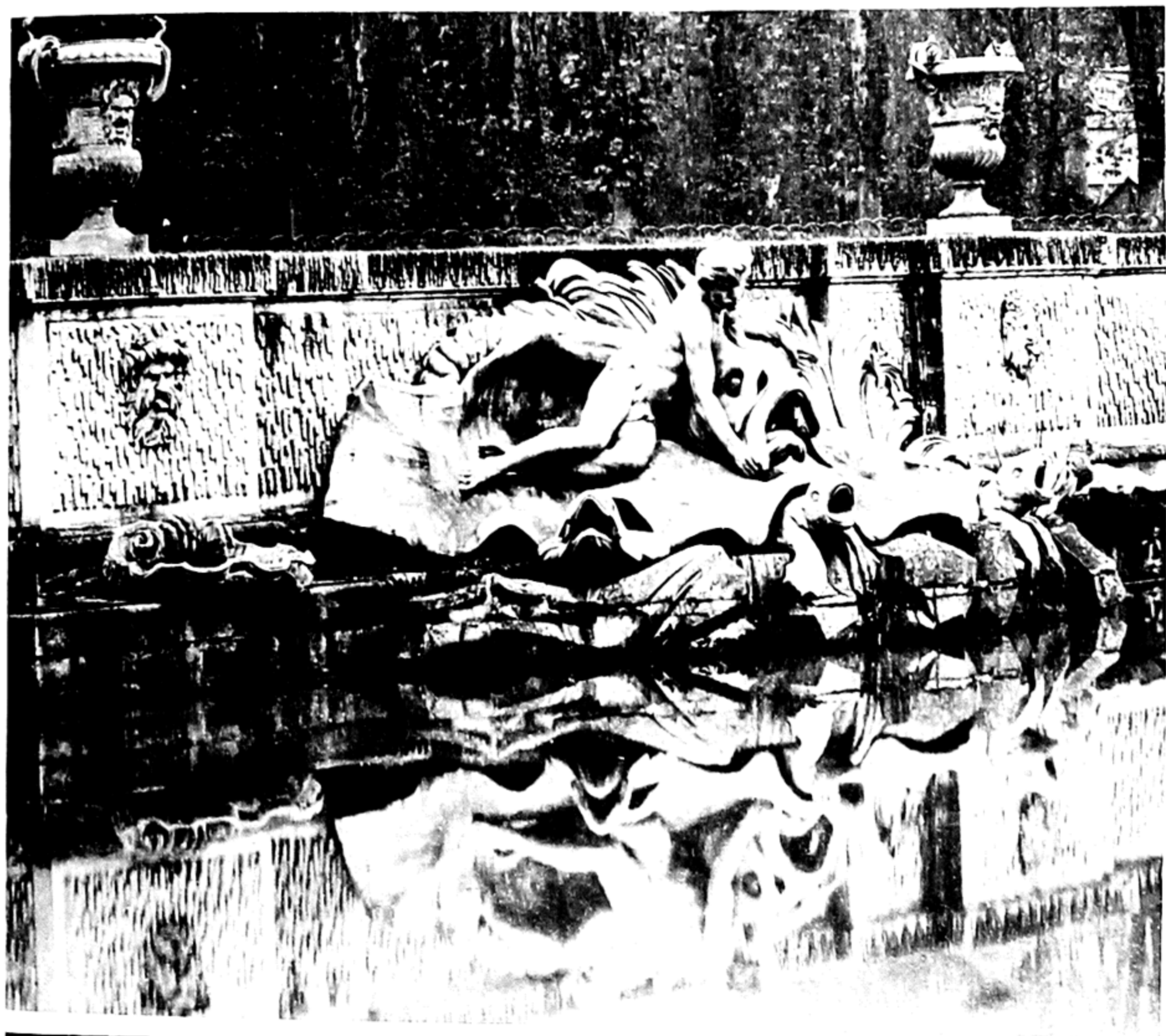


PLATE LXXXIX. (a) Portrait bust of Mme Houdon, wife of the sculptor. Paris, Louvre. Plaster; *ca.* 1790. (b) Portrait bust of Voltaire (1694–1778). Paris, Louvre. Bronze; *ca.* 1778. By Jean Antoine Houdon (1741–1828).

In the gay, mad, impossible France on the verge of the abyss at the end of the eighteenth century, wealthy nobles and some others had extensive, monumental dwellings and the equality of mankind was still ridiculous. So there was a physical and social demand for quantities of portrait sculpture. Jean Antoine Houdon did them well, often with lively and pleasant or otherwise appropriate expressions like the smile of his buxom wife, whom he obviously appreciated in a manner quite the opposite of court fashion. He was very successful, and portrait commissions crowded figure sculpture into a relatively small portion of his career. Like others of the time, these are mostly skillful, meaningless representations of classic gods or goddesses, one of the best of which was the *Diana* made for Catherine II of Russia. It was rejected by the Salon, at which he was a regular exhibitor, for the profound reason that a completely nude figure in spite of her bow and arrow and the moon on her brow would not be the chaste Diana but actually a follower of Venus.

Precocious son of a Versailles artisan, Houdon had mastered the teachings of the Academy and won the Prix de Rome at twenty. In his ten years in Rome he achieved the notice of the Pope, and on his return to Paris he took an active part in teaching at the Academy, creating his familiar *Écorché*, or skinless man, showing the surface muscles for instruction in anatomy. He was almost condemned in the Terror for working on a St. Scholastica but saved his life by quickly changing it to a personification of Philosophy.

Houdon's several portraits of Voltaire, made toward the end of the brilliant writer's stormy career, convey convincingly the contemporary description of a pair of remarkably bright eyes gleaming in a long, thin, and rather sly face. Highly successful in financial speculations, Voltaire was a man of considerable means and lived the fashionable life of the court and the salons when he was in Paris. Considerable time was spent elsewhere, however for he was always fleeing one sort of scrape or another, mostly precipitated by the irrepressibly devastating sarcasm of his writing. He passed several years at the court of Frederick the Great of Prussia, despite his stiff-necked resistance of the king's self-centered will. In England he greatly admired the open-mindedness and tolerance of personal idiosyncrasy in contrast to the strict conventionality of the French court.

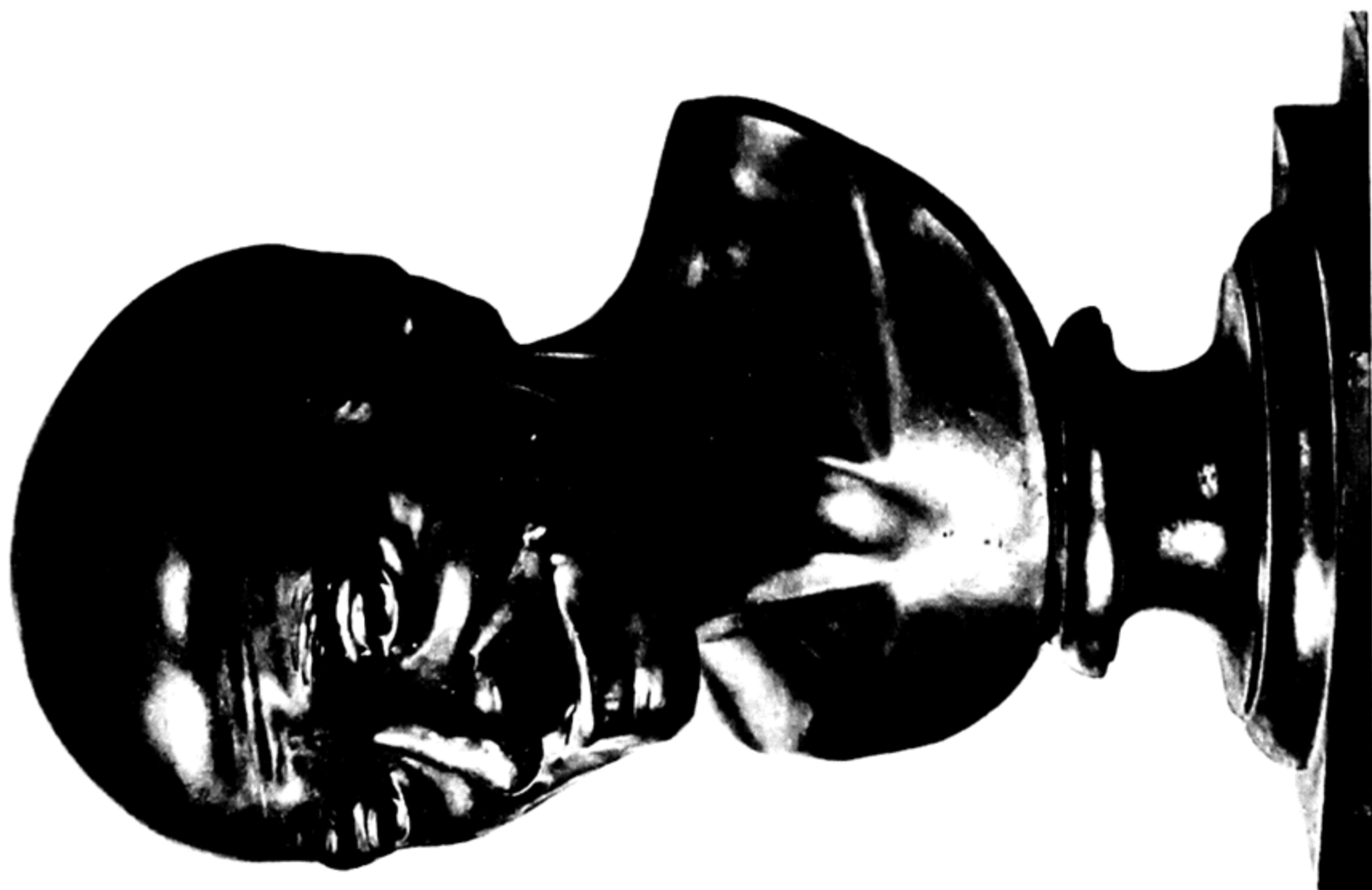


PLATE XC. (a) John Paul Jones (1747–1792) and (b) Joel Barlow (1754–1812), by Jean Antoine Houdon (1741–1828). New York, National Academy of Design. Plaster; 1780 and 1804.

Intense colonial rivalry with England and idealistic admiration for the revolt of the American colonies inspired real sympathy in France, and military aid was sent to Washington unofficially under the leadership of Marquis de Lafayette. During this period America turned to the French market for imports required by her provincial economy. Benjamin Franklin, as a private citizen and as ambassador to France, was very alert in procuring desirable materials, manufacturing processes, and even craftsmen to send to the United States. When Congress appropriated funds to immortalize the Father of His Country, they turned to Franklin to find a suitable artist, and he persuaded young Houdon, who had already made a fine portrait of the venerable Philadelphian, to journey across the ocean. The well-known standing figure of Washington resulted.

Houdon had occasion to do many other portraits of Americans, who with their new-found freedom and growing wealth were beginning to take a part in the world's affairs. John Paul Jones was lionized in Paris when he landed in France after having raided the British port of Whitehaven and captured two frigates on the high seas with the single vessel under his command. Joel Barlow, colorful, liberal, ex-Tory writer and businessman, lived in France for many years after graduating from Yale and founding a weekly called *The American Mercury* at Hartford, Conn. He made a fortune in commercial operations including a real estate deal in which a company of Frenchmen, who eventually founded Gallipolis, Ohio, was persuaded to emigrate to America. His liberal ideas crystallized in contact with progressive intellectuals in France, and he became active in advocating political reform, writing the advanced democratic treatise *Advice to the Privileged Orders* in 1792, in which he advised the ruling classes to abolish inequalities and privileged abuse of the people in an intelligent reconstruction of society, instead of forcing them to resort to violent means of adjustment. An inscription on his portrait indicates that he was fifty years old when Houdon made it in 1804, just before Barlow's return to America. He was sent to France again by the government in 1811 as minister plenipotentiary to arrange a commercial treaty with Napoleon, but died of exposure during the negotiations that took place on the retreat from Moscow.

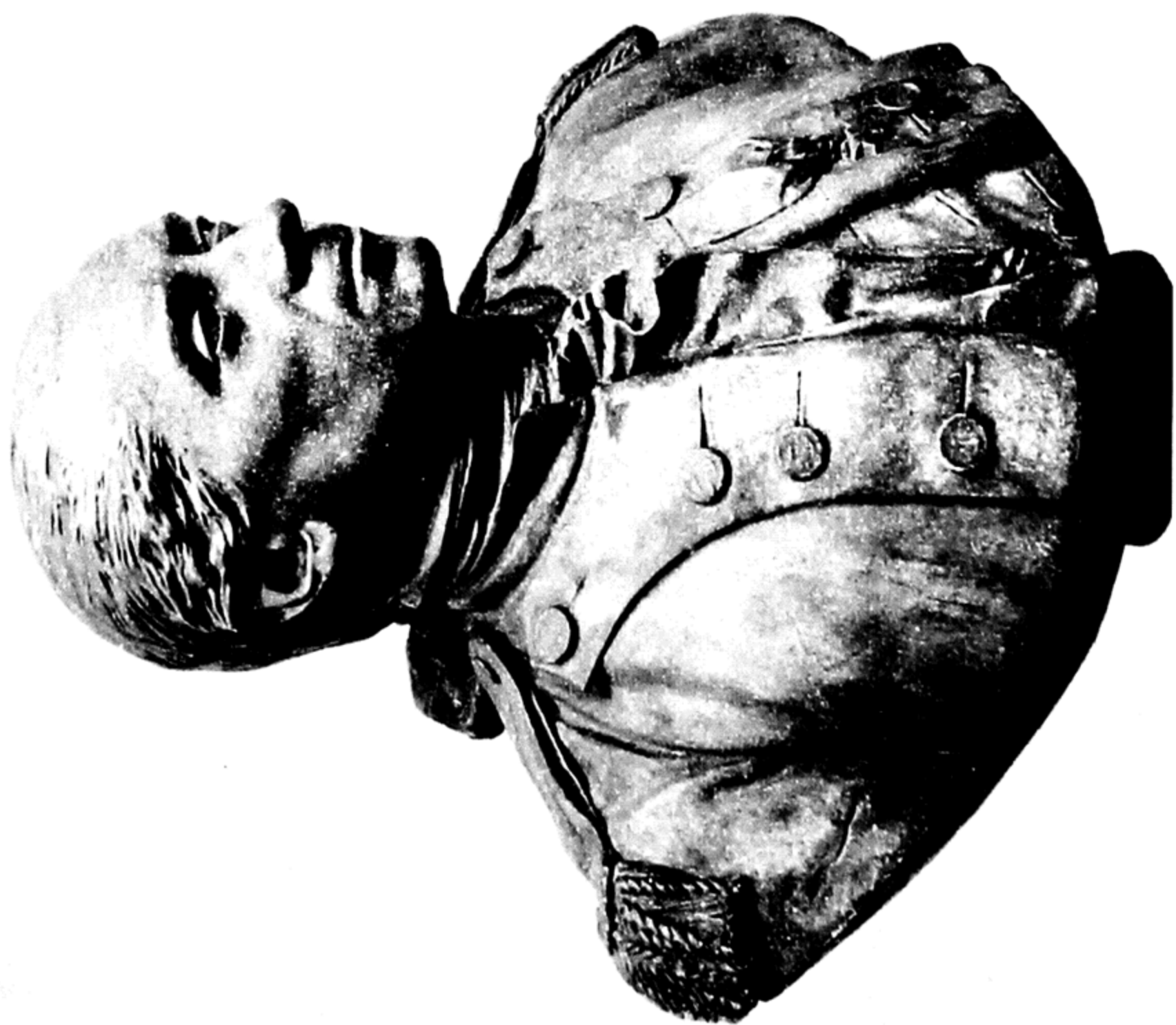


PLATE XCI. (a) Cupid and Psyche, by Antonio Canova (1757–1822). Paris, Louvre. Marble; 1793. (b) Apollo and Marpessa, by John Flaxman (1755–1826). London, Royal Academy of Arts. Marble; ca. 1775.

History's gain was art's loss. About the middle of the eighteenth century the German archaeologist Winckelmann (1717–1768) began the systematic study of classical remains, publishing works on Herculaneum, Pompeii, Paestum, as well as more theoretical treatises including his outstanding *History of Ancient Art* (1764). The host of young art students serving at the Renaissance altar of antiquity in Rome, fired by his enthusiastic treatment of the subject, resolved upon a purer and more direct expression of the classic idiom resulting in the Neoclassic phase of European art. Archaeology placed the knowledge of Greek and Roman art on a scientific basis; but "purity" in living art simply produced effeminate, smooth-skinned, or night-gowned figures responsible for the general notion that classic art is cold and colorless. Armed with Winckelmann's teaching, Neoclassicism had set out to "correct" Renaissance style by producing work more closely modeled on the classic, but it expressed no more than a new version of puritan morality, become an opportunistic device for being all things to all men under the futile banner of absolute idealism.

Antonio Canova (1757–1822) was the leading Italian exponent of Neoclassicism, and John Flaxman (1755–1826), son of a Covent Garden molder and seller of cast plaster figures, carried its banner in England. His career illustrates the growing difficulty of the artist's survival as his work is increasingly considered to be a precious adornment rather than a vital expression of life. Though Flaxman never suffered, it was not by the creation of major works of art that he lived. Prize scholar at the Royal Academy, he was forced to resort to three types of work, which tapped the broad reservoirs of popular culture rather than the limited patronage of high-priced elegance. From 1775 to 1787 he lived largely by designing the classic motifs that distinguished Wedgwood pottery. He then began to receive commissions for the long series of relatively simple monuments to the dead on which he mainly subsisted. Outline illustrations for the ancient poets (including Dante) were the third source of income, which also brought Flaxman considerable note, while the now famous engravings of his friend William Blake were mostly derided or ignored.



NINETEENTH CENTURY AND MODERN

SENSE AND NONSENSE

FOR two years after the fall of the Bastille, July 14, 1789, the vacillation of Louis XVI between liberal counselors like Mirabeau and Lafayette on the one hand, the blindly reactionary queen Marie Antionette and the conniving *émigré* nobles on the other, finally goaded the frantic forces of the Revolution to remove by violence the threat of a restoration of the *ancien régime*. However, it was many years before France in the constitution of 1875 caught up politically with the general trend toward parliamentary, constitutional rule, based on wide popular suffrage with a stable and fairly high grade of civil administration. Monarchists and clericals preached reaction and restoration on the Right; the new working class and socialist organizations, which arose with the mechanization of industry, called for "completion" of the Revolution on the Left; and business sat solidly in the center trying to get a little order and stability without interference.

Released politically and culturally as well as economically from their anomalous subjection to an incapable and irresponsible nobility, the entrepreneurial groups in commerce and manufacture, the people who were working with the astounding new methods of making things, soon inaugurated an age of unparalleled growth. Technical advance of unbelievable speed and scope increased material production beyond measure and created services hitherto undreamed of. Constructive as well as destructive influences of the development are reflected in the dynamic character and unprecedented activity of cultural expression.

In the first place the individualistic tendencies of the economy of opportunity reached their most extreme stage, producing an appearance of infinite variety in cultural expression. The various groups working for control represented forces with basically distinct attitudes toward manners and art. But also, every factory owner, every large-scale merchant, after a brief period of stability and profit, felt himself a lord in his particular domain and proudly sought appropriate distinction for his position. The number of people who might wish to own and could afford to buy some kind of art became large in comparison with other periods. So that each might have

the feeling of making a personal choice expressive of his free, individual personality, "original" aspects of style achieved a special value. The artist exaggerated his every whim and impulse, which led inevitably to the development of exotic and bizarre styles.

It was an age of rapid and sometimes accidental accessions of wealth, tremendous profits in business often resulting from chance or from cutthroat competition as well as from sagacity and service to the community, while great fortunes were rare or unattainable in the ranks of professional and industrial employment. The wealthy, especially the parvenu, wished to find means of indicating that there was an intrinsic difference between themselves and others, partly because they believed it and partly to justify the vast inequalities. This encouraged a debased intensification of artificiality in culture to a point where it lost all direct contact with natural experience and might not readily be understood by those who had no special introduction. The more abstruse the forms of art, the more impenetrable to the uninitiated, the greater their value as a distinction to the "connoisseur," which means precisely one who is "in the know." This is an important consideration in the extravagant forms of modern art, each of which starts out by being notoriously "incomprehensible."

Long before the French Revolution, finance capital began to develop forms of enterprise in which investment of accumulated wealth brought regular and substantial return with little or no participation of the vast number of owners. For every doing nothing noble whose head rolled in the Terror, there were soon hundreds and then thousands of people who lived entirely on independent means, passed by inheritance from generation to generation. In France they were called *rentiers*, and the usual pattern of such an existence has two characteristics that directly affect artistic expression. In the first place a person who does not work has no reason to develop any practical sense of the world about him. Knowledge except as a hobby is boring; manual labor as a means of livelihood is degrading. He expresses himself in activities without practical meaning, hunting, but not for need of food; racing and travel, but not to get anywhere; gambling for excitement, not to gain needed funds; or simply an endless round of sheer entertainment. His cultural expression, lacking the foundation of experience in serious productive work related to the necessities of life around him, is merely an elaborate etiquette and play, his art the fictional imagining often called Romanticism or escape.

The art of the *rentier* becomes also an art of sensation, both exciting and delicious. As a person who always consumes and never produces, his entire concern is the endless selection of material for his own satisfaction, and he develops a taste for fine or striking quality in all he acquires—elegant cuisine, vintage wines, fashionably cut clothing of rich materials. Transferred to art this sensitized taste is concerned with

purely aesthetic elements—color, light, texture, and also intrinsic qualities of form and composition—rather than with specific references to the visual world. Eventually this leads to the pseudoanalytical separation of these elements from subject matter in what is called “abstract art,” invented to free the artist’s “pure” aesthetic expression from the necessity of making his creations resemble natural objects.

Intensified individualistic expression is not the whole story of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, for this period also has certain outstanding characteristics that are due to nonindividualistic or group expression, both conservative and liberal. The old academies, reorganized in France after the Revolution, continued to grind out dogmatic, conservative rules, accepting new trends slowly and maintaining considerable allegiance to the classic. Academic art was used for public monuments and “official” purposes generally, to lend dignity to the nation and its institutions proclaiming the aims and achievements that would engage the respectful affection of the people. Obviously an absolute and authoritative canon of correctness and a popularly understood symbolism must be provided for works of this sort, which was the role of the academies.

The old royal academies had represented something more, however, than the authoritarian taste of the court, though that was a major function. They expressed, too, the growing need for precise universal standards and organization in the productive world of commerce and manufacture. Tremendous advances along these lines grew into modern philosophy, science, and invention whose rational, dependable, practical attitude had a twofold effect on art. A taste for realistic representation was encouraged, based on increasingly scientific observation of nature and various new physiological discoveries. This sort of thing lent itself unfortunately to the formalized methods of the academies, and for a while a flood of mechanical, uninspired imitation of nature, mistaking the means for the end, discredited one of the most serious functions of art—to express the fundamental character of human life.

The popularity of scientific thought also produced various “logical” explanations of art, mostly as yet so incomplete and unoriented as mainly to confuse the general public as well as many artists. Objective analysis of art is by no means impossible, as many have come to believe in view of the past record of failure and resulting confusion; but its aim would not be dogmatic approval of any one style or program. Rather would it provide a basis for understanding all expressions, or for expressing any given culture.

Besides the aesthetic individualism of wealthy and leisured groups and the official art still produced by the academies, another type of expression appeared in the nineteenth century. Idealistic and critical phases represented the demand for ceaseless progress toward perfection for all mankind. Development of industrial and scientific

techniques required an ever larger professional and highly skilled personnel. Their incomes admitted of some margin of comfort above the level of mere subsistence, they enjoyed a certain amount of leisure, and the community had to provide a fairly high grade of educational service as a basis for the high degree of skill and knowledge they must acquire. Within their limited means some of these practical, intelligent, and informed people have provided a patronage and following for nonindividualistic liberal expression. Because of their common practical experience they have recognized the need for constant, serious, productive effort as the basis of society, have understood the problems of progress and adjustment, and their cultural expression has tended toward constructively idealistic formulations and critical comment.

The influence of this type of patronage has been felt most generally in those forms whose cost of production may be spread over a number of consumers, like books and to some extent in the theater. Painting and sculpture were affected to a much smaller degree, because since their whole cost of production must generally be borne by a single patron, most support must come from wealthy individuals.

Because of the highly subjective character of expression in the arts, all the forces just outlined govern both the artist and the patron of art for the most part unconsciously, and there is no clear dividing line in practice between one type of form or interest and others. A romantic might like Wright's novel *Native Son*, chiefly because it is dramatic, a practical person primarily because it is illuminating, and legitimately it has both of these qualities. In the plastic arts, inept and dishonest explanations have confused interpretation, realistic art being uncritically discounted as "photographic" or as "mere" illustration, abstract styles making various extravagant claims to superior exposition of reality. At the present time the principal educational problem in the arts is mainly to clear away the fallacies of rationalization. Thus released, a normally alert personality soon discovers what to him is moving and expansive in art.

PLATE XCII. Napoleon Bonaparte entering Cairo, by Jean Léon Gérôme
(1824–1904). Paris, Luxembourg. Bronze gilt statuette; 1897.

Known principally as a painter, Gérôme is generally classed as a nineteenth-century “realist.” This means simply that instead of using the loosely brushed, pre-Impressionistic technique of Delacroix and his followers, he constructed his paintings with minute attention to detail, authenticated as far as possible for the particular historical or geographical setting he wished to create. For the “realism” ended with his manner of creation, the substance was as far from the time or the place he knew as the fancies of Romanticism could carry him: Roman gladiatorial contests and public martyrdom of Christian slaves, the colorful and wonderfully named bashi-bazouks of the Levant.

Perhaps it was the interest in the actual substance and structure of objects engendered by his realistic technique that impelled Gérôme toward sculpture. He exhibited his first work in the medium at the International Exhibition of 1878 and continued to show a few pieces a year until his death. In this statuette of the young Napoleon at the height of his temporarily successful Egyptian venture, the clarity of detail, the precise anatomy of the Arabian stallion, and the studied completeness of the equipment of horse and rider seem quite realistic, but the suggestion of color and textural richness in the profusion of oriental detail are Romantic in their strangeness and sensuous appeal, and the theme is a reflection of past glory.

Thomas Eakins (1844–1916), outstanding American painter, studied under Gérôme at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, returning home to paint solid realistic canvases. Unlike his master, however, his subjects were as realistic as his approach to material, representing the interests and relaxations of the well-to-do professional and intellectual circles he knew in Philadelphia. It was the period often referred to as the *Hegira*, which is Arabian for flight, because of the tremendous number of Americans who journeyed to Europe to study the arts and sciences. Eakins was big enough to use the technical knowledge acquired there for a sincere and direct expression of his own cultural environment, but many American artists became mere imitators of European styles. Thus the provincial situation of the United States added another influence to reinforce the fallacy in the minds of its people that art and culture are artificial graces, which may be acquired only by a costly and privileged pilgrimage to a strange and oracular shrine.



PLATE XCIII. Ugolino and his children, by Jean Baptiste Carpeaux (1827–1875). Paris, Louvre; originally in the Tuileries Gardens. Bronze; 1861.

The artificiality of culture being fully accepted in the nineteenth century, artists were increasingly impelled to derive inspiration from the art of the past. The sculptor Carpeaux, for example, wrote to a friend in Paris soon after he had gone to Italy as winner of the *Prix de Rome*, that he would like to see a work conceived by Dante and executed by Michelangelo. Thus superficially did they toy with all sorts of material regardless of fundamental incompatibility, in a fanciful search for piquant novelty. Carpeaux apparently decided to become the midwife of his curious mating, for his Ugolino group reflects something of the tension and chunky anatomy of Michelangelo's male figures, and the incident is borrowed from Dante's *Inferno* (Canto XXXIII).

In the second division of the ninth circle of Hell, where traitors to country and party were consigned, Dante found two souls frozen in one hole, the upper, Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, gnawing the head of the lower, Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, archbishop of Pisa. Ugolino had abandoned the Ghibelline faction in 1275, enabling the Guelfs to capture Pisa, last opposing city in Tuscany, whereupon they made him leader. Ten years later he intrigued with Ruggieri to do away with his own grandson, Nino Visconti, who then shared his rule. In three years, however, the archbishop turned against him, and caused his imprisonment in the Tower of Hunger with two of his sons and two grandsons, where he died of starvation early in 1289.

It was this agony that Carpeaux depicted in typical Romantic fashion, referring not only to an extravagantly dramatic episode of a remote time and place, but to one that achieved significance mainly through its previous exploitation in art. Carpeaux turned to Romantic emotionalism in reaction against the sweetness and light which moribund Neoclassicism (see Plate XCI, *a* and *b*) sought in the "purity" of classic thought and form. Never did two opposing camps feel themselves more bitterly or distantly separated from one another, but fundamentally each advocated the same program: cultural escape from the practical realities of life in purely artificial and derivative expressions.



PLATE XCIV. The Dance, by Jean Baptiste Carpeaux (1827–1875). Paris, Louvre. Plaster, 1869.

This gay bacchanalian revel was used as the model for an almost identical representation in stone, one of four groups on the façade of the Paris Opera. At the very center of the Paris of the luxurious shops, the boulevards, and the cafés, the Opera was a symbol of the elegant social life and entertainment that made Paris the world's Mecca of leisure and wealth. Perhaps the bright society is too adequately summed up in this frothy group. The slender femininity of the dominant male figure, the buxom eroticism of the subject females, and the general light-hearted frenzy of the whole might be called "Night in Paris." Just put a top hat on the man and it becomes a playboy *boulevardier's* dream of success, dashing out of the opera surrounded by an admiring claque of beauties, after having madly hissed and screamed at a new Wagnerian opus or an aging ballerina, to display his cultured "taste."

It was in this period that the tendency arose for the sculptor to do less of the difficult work of executing a composition in its final material. Michelangelo carved directly in stone, working from small sketch models and drawings. As late as the eighteenth century Houdon had built his own furnaces in the city of Paris for bronze casting. Of course studio assistants were employed to do heavy work, initial roughing out of the block under the sculptor's direction, and the like. But as the inspiration and aesthetic sensibility of the artist became more important, he became less and less concerned with the material aspects of his craft. Making a completely finished model (instead of a mere sketch) in clay, the sculptor turned it over to technical specialists for enlarging to full scale, casting in plaster, and execution in the final material. Thus this complete model of Carpeaux's *Dance* exists in the Louvre, although the monument itself is in stone on the facade of the Opera. In divorcing himself from the material aspects of his craft presumably for maximum dedication to the aesthetic, the artist also shows a growing feeling of superiority to manual labor derived from the cultural ideology of his economically independent patrons.



PLATE XCV. Ape riding a gnu, by Antoine Louis Barye (1796–1875). Paris, Louvre. Bronze; *ca.* 1847.

With high regard for scientific knowledge and investigation, the torn and distracted councils of the Revolution decreed in 1793 that a museum of natural history be established, and at the suggestion of the great French naturalist, Comte de Buffon, a menagerie was included. Barye, a goldsmith and student of sculpture, became interested in the animals at the Jardin des Plantes where the public zoo of Paris was installed, and from the early 1830's devoted himself almost exclusively to small bronzes of animals. They are generally in groups of two like this, but unlike it a ferocious animal is generally shown pouncing upon a defenseless one.

Obviously this interest in strange wild animals is again the romantic quest for the unusual, the unfamiliar; and the violence of sudden death in the more usual struggling groups has an added sense of dramatic excitement. Here there is a more pleasant humorous quality, but the ingenuity of the ape is doubtless pure fancy, the legs of the gnu are posed more like a prancing horse than the phlegmatic beasts one sees caged in a zoo, and such fraternization among the species would never be tolerated in the conventional institution. A *plaisanterie*, to be sure. Roughly modeled surfaces enhance the richness of the work both optically, in the resulting contrasts of light and shade, and in respect to the sense of touch, for a surface of this sort "feels" to the eye somewhat like the rich pile of a thick carpet or the exciting roughness of the bark of a tree.

Comparatively small bronzes, like easel paintings, achieved a great popularity in the age of many small patrons. The owner of a factory or a large store, though he might achieve sufficient wealth to live in perfect comfort, would of course reside in a town house, limited in proportions by comparison with a palace or chateau. A great number could spend several hundred francs or several thousand for works of art, but there were few in the class of the princely patrons of the Renaissance. Furthermore money was a commercial factor of prime importance as the financial organization of industry developed, and surplus wealth must be left at work, reinvested in promotion and expansion. The new industrial bourgeoisie consumed quantities of sculpture scaled in size to their mantels and drawing-room tables, in price to a calculated capital budget.

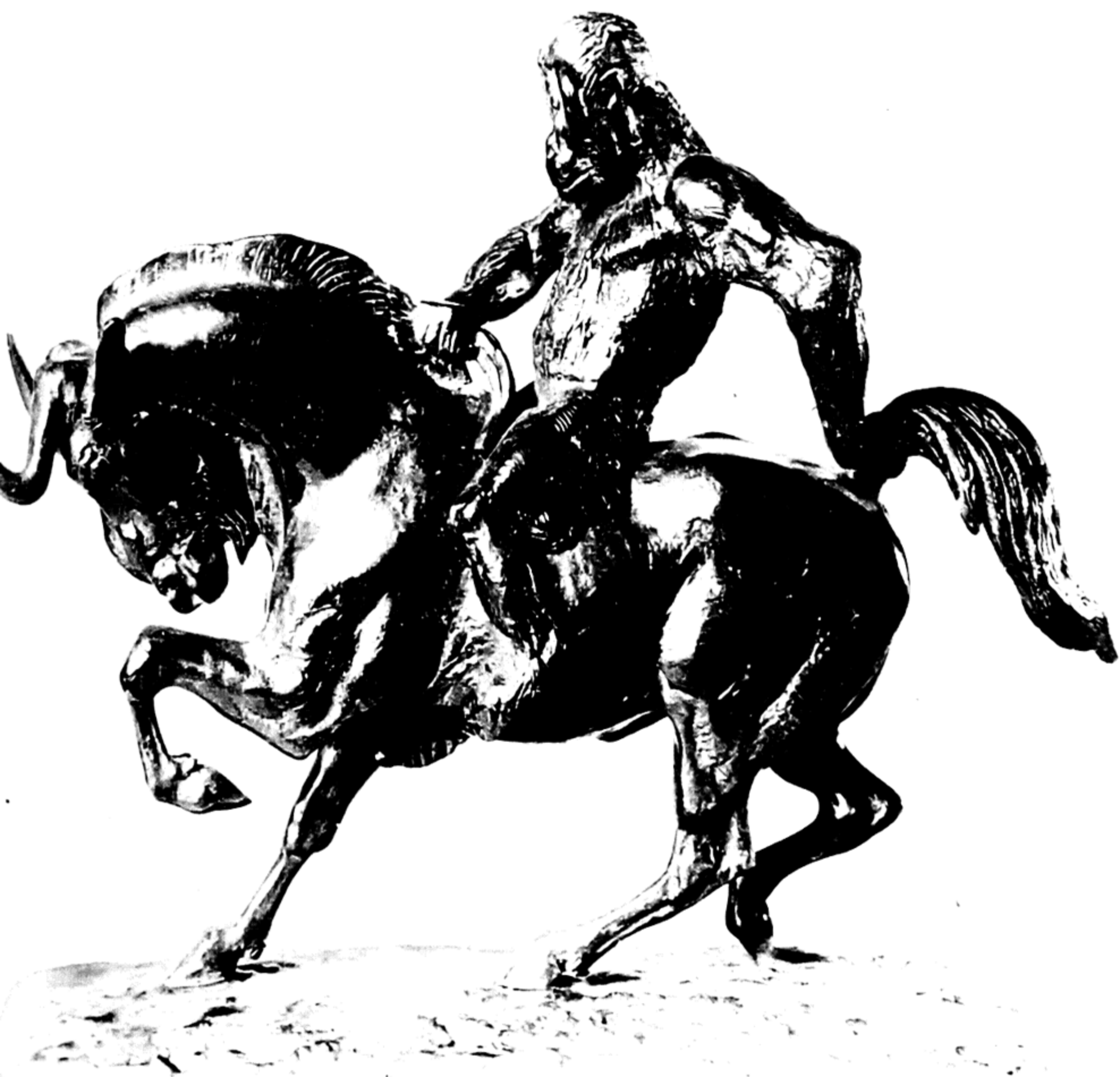


PLATE XCVI. Mounted Arabs killing a lion, by Antoine Louis Barye (1796–1875). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bronze.

One of the favorite subjects for Romantic painters as well as sculptors of nineteenth-century France was native life in North Africa. Finally subjugated by Marshal Bugeaud who developed the military technique of the flying column during his governorship from 1841 to 1846, Algeria had been organized by the French under a colonial policy that vacillated between colonization and financial exploitation. It became possible for Frenchmen to travel and sojourn in protected areas with relative impunity, and many artists relieved their fellow citizens of the need even of this facilitated effort by sketching for a few weeks or months and returning to Paris to paint Algerian scenes the rest of their lives.

The elements were simple and required little penetration into the actualities of native life—fleet riders briskly galloping through wild landscape and brandishing exotic weapons as their long burnouses streamed or billowed in the wind, or crafty bearded men in rich garments, hovering about the bazaars or mosques, wild native dances, and, of course, the harems. Slavery, brigandage, violence of warfare and the hunt, provided an unlimited sense of dramatic freedom and excitement for cramped city dwellers like Alphonse Daudet's famous character of *Tartarin de Tarascon*, first published in 1872.

Amidst his collection of lethal weapons and potted plants from all of the colorful corners of the globe, Tartarin created quite a reputation for adventurous bravery by the tales he told. Aroused to new heights by the arrival in town of an African lion in a traveling circus, he became the most ferocious of lion hunters and longed for the adventures of the desert. Tired at last of the endless fare of unsupported words, his friends demanded deeds. Fearfully he set out after all possible delay in the astounding costume of a Turkish Zouave, with elaborate equipment for hunting lions. Misgivings grew as he neared the desert, but Tartarin never saw a wild lion, shooting by mistake a blind, decrepit beast that had been trained to beg. Fed up with adventure, he brought back the skin to satisfy his neighbors, but amidst their generous acclaim his confidence soon returned, and he remained the local lion hunter to the end of his days. Barye was not sufficiently successful for leisure and travel. He never left the city of Paris.



PLATE XCVII. Victor Hugo at Guernsey, by Auguste Rodin (1840–1917).
Paris, Palais Royal Gardens. Marble; 1897.

An unskillful politician but given to extravagantly revolutionary or republican statements for dramatic effect, Victor Hugo (1802–1885) was forced to flee France after the *coup d'état* of 1851, and spent most of the period until the fall of the Second Empire in 1870 writing prolifically in a comfortable retreat on the Isle of Guernsey. Leader of the Romantic movement in literature, which by the time of his return had outgrown the controversial stage, Hugo spent his last fifteen years still creating vigorously and enjoying his great fame. Six hundred thousand of his fellow citizens acclaimed him on his eightieth birthday, and when he died his body lay in state under the Arc de Triomphe and was buried in the Panthéon, though in a pauper's coffin as he had requested.

From the medieval craftsman who shared anonymity with the butcher, the baker, and other skilled contributors to man's material welfare, artists of all sorts had been elevated by stages until in the nineteenth century they achieved a distorted position of eminence, though Hugo's fame was exceptional. Demand for individuality of expression both in respect to aesthetic sensitivity and ingenuity of form or subject, caused an exaggerated concern with the personality of the artist, which still affects his role in society. This is seen in the increasing use of art, the artist, and the materials of art as the subjects for works of art. *The Dance* by Carpeaux epitomizes an entire medium, his *Ugolino* is a literary incident. Romantic emphasis on the artist's personality is also reflected in a growing Bohemianism, which he assumed as a promotional device to emphasize his individuality. It also made an additional stock in trade, a side line for the inferior or unsuccessful artist, to titillate the jaded or inadequate cultural interests of potential patrons, actually selling himself as a source of amusement for which his art was a mere bill of lading.

Rodin himself indulged in a certain amount of undisciplined impulsiveness. This statue of Victor Hugo was refused because he deliberately created a seated figure when a standing one was required by the architectural setting for which it had originally been commissioned. Later it was set up in a free, open spot in the gardens of the Palais Royal.



PLATE XCVIII. *Eternal springtime*, by Auguste Rodin (1840–1917). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Marble; 1884.

On the urban, "sub-chateau" scale of the small bronzes that became popular along with easel painting in the age of many city-domiciled small fortunes, Rodin made a number of small or moderate sized marble groups. Mostly expressing the natural eroticism released by constant leisure, they are all completely vague and unconcerned with any concrete, practical, or even idealistic reference to actual life. The persons represented are young, unclothed, and the features of their faces are almost indistinguishable. In fact the entire composition seems to be bathed in a thick, opaque fog—not London's noted pea soup, more like whipped cream—to make their generalization even more imprecise and mysterious.

The technique used in these groups, like that of Impressionism in painting, clearly indicates the growing interest in purely aesthetic values in the plastic arts. Suggestions of material appealing to the sense of touch are conveyed in the contrast between the smooth flesh and the roughly hewn, "unfinished" base and background. In carving the hair on the man's head, the sculptor simply attempts to give an impression of the appearance, being more interested in conveying the "feel" of a soft, thick mass than the actual detail. The lack of sharp lines or edges throughout, the gently grading tones in the flesh, and the delicate staccato of the toolmarks in the background, are all optically appealing or exciting devices of an art almost wholly concerned with sensation rather than idea.



PLATE XCIX. The burghers of Calais, by Auguste Rodin (1840–1917).
Paris, Rodin Museum. Plaster; 1884–1886; study for the monument
at Calais, 1895.

To a competition held by the city of Calais for a statue commemorating the heroism of a leading fourteenth-century citizen, Eustache de St. Pierre, Rodin submitted instead a composition showing all six of the heroic burghers who offered themselves as a sacrifice for the protection of their fellow townsmen. Despite this arbitrary procedure he won the commission and executed the group of figures one-half over life size in two years, but it was not until 1895 that the monument was erected in front of the Town Hall of Calais because of opposition by the Municipality on the ground that the figures were not sufficiently "heroic."

The monument commemorates an event early in the disastrous Hundred Years' War, which devastated France because of her inability to oppose the repeated raids of the English army. English archers had developed a new military technique, the massed flight of "clothyard" arrows shot from light bows, and in every battle after Crécy in 1346, when the troops of Edward III demonstrated the effectiveness of this new weapon against the loosely organized, heavily armored French knights, they continued to hold the field even against superior numbers until the advent of gunpowder. After the battle of Crécy, Edward lay siege to the port of Calais, but heroism and self-sacrifice enabled the townsmen to endure under the leadership of Jean de Vienne for eleven months. Weakened by famine and disheartened by the withdrawal of promised aid from Philip VI, the town asked for terms. Its fate is told by the ancient chronicler Froissart.

Edward would spare the town if six leading burghers were delivered to him bare-headed, barefooted, with ropes about their necks, and the keys to the town and its fortress in their hands. Eustache de St. Pierre, a wealthy merchant, volunteered and five others followed his example. The English barons, moved by this heroism and devotion, attempted to dissuade Edward from his sadistic purpose. He persisted but reluctantly gave in to the queen, "great with child." According to Froissart he turned them over to her and she released them, honorably clothed, banqueted, and attended, but there is a record in the Tower of London of the imprisonment of one John of Vienne and his companions.



PLATE C. Athlete struggling with python, by Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830–1896). London, Royal Academy of Arts. Bronze; 1877.

Son of an English physician and living abroad a good deal of his early life, Lord Leighton was chiefly a painter. Most of his work dealt with dramatic subjects from classical mythology. During his early days in Rome he painted several incidents from the Italian Renaissance, mainly based on literary or artistic references to the period, such as his *Cimabue's Madonna Being Carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence*, which was bought by Queen Victoria.

The melodramatic situation and the exotic and terrible beast in this group, suggested perhaps by Britain's concern with the eastern tropical lands of its native habitat, certainly show the Romantic love of the unusual and the exciting. The powerfully muscled figure of the athlete is clearly dependent on Michelangelo, one of the leading sources of technical inspiration for Romantic sculptors. In fact even the subject may have been suggested by the struggling slaves intended for the tomb of Pope Julius II (Plate LXXV), and the head with its Grecian profile, deep-set eyes, and heavy mop of very curly hair, bears a distinct resemblance to Michelangelo's colossal marble David.

Artists in the nineteenth century imitated not only the time-honored Classic and High Renaissance styles, but eventually sought "inspiration" in their general search for novelty from the art of many other ages and lands. The English Pre-Raphaelites tried to copy the "primitive" approach of the early Italian Renaissance; some followed the style of Rembrandt or other masters of the seventeenth-century Dutch school; some were intrigued by Levantine and Far Eastern art. Turning his back on life, the artist in his ivory tower used the material of the world about him only when he was able to see it in terms of a style of the past. In the airy words of Lord Leighton's distinguished contemporary, W. S. Gilbert (1836–1911), it seemed that "Art stopped short at the cultivated court of the Empress Josephine." Other fashions besides those in art were affected by this attitude, and Leighton's museumlike London home contained a hall decorated completely in Arabian style with tiles from Damascus.



PLATE CI. Ratapoil, by Honoré Daumier (1808–1879). Paris, Luxembourg.
Bronze; *ca.* 1850.

The brave, forward-looking ideals of the brotherhood of man in a free and equal society, put forth in the French Revolution and reinforced by the repeated insurgence of the people of Paris since the day they had first made themselves felt in the taking of the Bastille, could never again be politically ignored. Though the gains of republicanism in France were gradually liquidated in the Restoration and the Second Empire, the awakened belief in the consent of the governed was never destroyed. As industrial change brought new miseries of long hours, foul living conditions, and periodic unemployment to large sections of the working population, they joined together to fight for the amelioration of conditions that brought unprecedented wealth, luxury, and leisure to others.

As a consequence, an element previously almost unknown appears in the cultural expression of the nineteenth century—a criticism of the existing order, which attacks any injustice or failure to provide for all sections of mankind. All shades of opinion from militant advocacy of various forms of socialism and organized trade-union programs, to a sympathetic, sentimental, or paternalistic reformism “from above” appear as an important new category of cultural expression in all the arts as well as in science and politics.

Honoré Daumier, painter, lithographer, and caricaturist for leading French political journals, was one of the most penetrating of the critics on the Left, and an artist of supreme expressive power. As Louis Napoleon prepared a *coup d'état* in 1851 for the overthrow of the Second Republic, his money and propaganda developed the “benevolent” association of the Society of the Tenth of December, recruited from dismissed soldiers, carnival followers, broken-down, dissolute, and desperate riffraff from the slums and from the cheap cafés and dives of the underworld. Daumier was quick to sense the significance of the groups of drunken hoodlums who boisterously applauded President Napoleon at public events, or quietly fell upon stanch republicans in back alleys and side streets. He created the swaggering figure of *Ratapoil*, exposing them in a series of trenchant cartoons indicating their treachery. Here the vicious thug leans on his heavy stick that serves him also as a club, a sorry pretense of elegance in his battered top hat, his beard, and mustache, a caricature of Louis Napoleon's own.



PLATE CII. (a) Miner. Brussels, Royal Museum. Bronze statuette; 1896. (b) Dock hand. Paris, Luxembourg. Monumental bronze; 1893. By Constantin Meunier (1831–1905).

From hand work, to water-powered machinery, to coal-fired steam was the course of the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century. Additional importance was given to coal and iron when the former replaced charcoal in the smelting process. Rich in deposits of both coal and iron ore, Belgium became an important industrial region, and when the struggling young painter-sculptor Constantin Meunier was commissioned to design a triumphal float representing the *pays noir*, a sketching tour of the country opened his eyes. “L’élégance est la compagne de la force,” he once wrote to a friend, and in the stark, smoky, fire-splashed landscape of mine and mill he saw the elegance of purposed and powerful workmen who gave direction and meaning to the gigantic structures they operated.

Perhaps it was his own slight and infirm, but unceasingly energetic, physical constitution, irreparably undermined by the poverty in which his mother struggled alone to raise six children, that impelled his unbounded admiration for the skilled physique of the industrial worker. But he had always sought for meanings in life, at first mystically, making long sojourns as a youth at a Trappist monastery near Antwerp. Because of his poverty and an early marriage followed by a growing family, Meunier was forced to cling to meager sources of livelihood in his immediate environment, designing glass, playing cards, cotton prints, and other commercial jobs. Deprived of the usual carefree Bohemian period of study in Paris, he escaped the precious abhorrence of men who work and never cultivated the haughty blindness to the dignity of life about him.

The new industrial population of Europe was gradually becoming recognized as an economic and political force in the community and, to the craftsman that Meunier was, they must have seemed the essence of the comparatively abundant and luxurious new way of life enjoyed by considerable sections of the population. The sculptor seems not to have become involved in the ideologies growing up around this social phenomenon, but simply responded with the true vision of an artist to that which was too obvious for others to see, too plain to interest the proud.



PLATE CIII. Miner working a vein, by Constantin Meunier (1831–1905).
Brussels, Royal Museum. Bronze; 1892.

Dedicated to sculpture and absorbed in the bustling activity of large industrial towns, Meunier nevertheless felt obliged to accept a professorship of painting in the quiet academic atmosphere of the University at Louvain, as he was not sufficiently successful otherwise to be assured of comfort for his family. Feverishly active in the time not occupied by his classes, he managed to create an imposing series of works, causing modern industrial figures to come into being one after another in the ancient hall assigned to him as a studio. During this period he conceived his crowning achievement, a *Monument to Labor* on which he worked for the remainder of his life. Shortly before his death it was purchased by the government, but he did not live to see its erection completed, a great solid structure surmounted by the *Sower*, with reliefs of *The Mine*, *Industry*, *The Harvest*, and *The Port* on the four sides of the square central mass, and free-standing individual figures of typical workers ranged about at intervals. The *Miner Working a Vein* is a preliminary study for the central figure in the large stone relief of *The Mine*.

Meunier's technique was the rough, impressionistic, fluid modeling of Romantic sculpture in his day, and undoubtedly his interest in the strange, grimy, powerful world of the machine showed something of the Romantic inclination toward any drama of force beyond the pale of salon society. Certainly the belated vogue that his work enjoyed at the very end of his life, and for a short time after his death, depended in part on a moral sentimentality that admired Meunier's courage as an artist in defying precious taboos against commonplace reality, and yearned for identification with the practical forces of life—at a distance of course—like the eighteenth century's vague approval of the noble savage and simple rusticity. Actually, however, his forceful and dignified characters are worthy of a deeper and more genuine interest.



PLATE CIV. Industry, by Constantin Meunier (1831–1905). Brussels, Royal Museum. Bronze; 1890.

Like the previous figure, this bust-length fragment or sketch showing two steel workers at a furnace was a preliminary study around which Meunier built another of the four principal reliefs, that representing *Industry*, on the *Monument of Labor* completed after his death in 1905. As in all his sculptured workmens' heads, intelligence and purpose are forcefully portrayed in the faces of these men, tense and absorbed in their exacting task of producing a miraculous plenty with the great new tools society in their age had invented. Unlike the classically generalized, or romantically light-hearted, bizarre, histrionic, and self-conscious personalities so commonly created by the art of his time, Meunier's workmen as prime movers of the productive forces in society are eminently capable, responsible, and adult.

Meunier had abandoned sculpture completely in his youth, disgusted with the sweet, conventional style he was taught, and was virtually setting out upon a new career at more than fifty years of age when he started to model industrial figures he had already studied in painting. The sculptor had little or no thought of propaganda in his art, but he showed the way in which much can be said for the people he so greatly admired. Cultural expression helps to improve human society by the sharp and penetrating criticism of a Daumier, which attacks the obstacles to progressive change, implying the direction in which it must move. But art may also serve the cause of progress by fervently putting forth its positive aims and principles, by celebration of the dignity and social stature of those who work for a better world. By the forceful presentation of manual workers as capable and dignified agents in their own sphere, the works of Meunier give the lie to the elaborate structure of artificiality whereby leisured culture promotes the myth that stupidity and inferior sensibility are the inescapable heritage of men of toil.



PLATE CV. Female torso, from *L'Action enchainée*, heroic figure erected as a monument to Louis Auguste Blanqui in Puget-Théniers, 1905. By Aristide Maillol (1861–). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bronze; third example, 1929.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the Romanticists ferreted out every possible subject of melodramatic or sentimental potentialities from history, literature, and the strange portions of the globe. Whereupon the Impressionists turned the whole ingenious business on its ear as violently as possible in the name of progress, by insisting that the subject mattered not at all. Monet, high priest of the Impressionist painters, said he would make great art of the simplest thing he could think of, which was a couple of haystacks, and he did a whole series of canvases of them, at different times of the day, under different atmospheric conditions, producing a wide variety of color effects according to the precise quality of changing light and shade.

The female form was Maillol's haystack, and he suggests a wide variety of moods and subjects by posing it in different ways. The heads of all are very much alike, there is virtually no setting, clothing, or other differentiating properties, even the full-bodied figures themselves are of a type, for he really celebrates again and again the sensuous beauty of rounded female flesh, as in the time-honored Song of Solomon. Because of the full simplicity of contour and the graceful dignity of the calm poses that best serve this purpose, and the negation of Romanticism's exaggerated drama, Maillol's sculpture is frequently compared with that of Greece, but of course his Classicism has little or nothing in common with academic revivals that have gone before.

The powerful, overlife-size female torso, which he calls *L'Action enchainée* because of its expression of restrained power, is derived from the large striding female figure of his monument to Blanqui. Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881), fiery revolutionist, was one of the most active and skillful of the radical Left through France's long travail toward the constitutional republic, during which he formulated some of the most extreme Socialist policies. A committee of his admirers, including Anatole France and Jean Jaurès under the chairmanship of Georges Clemenceau who had not yet broken with the Left, commissioned the monument in 1905 for Blanqui's native village of Puget-Théniers. The good officials were so shocked when they received the buxom female nude that they did all they could to hide it on a very high pedestal surrounded by railings and trees.

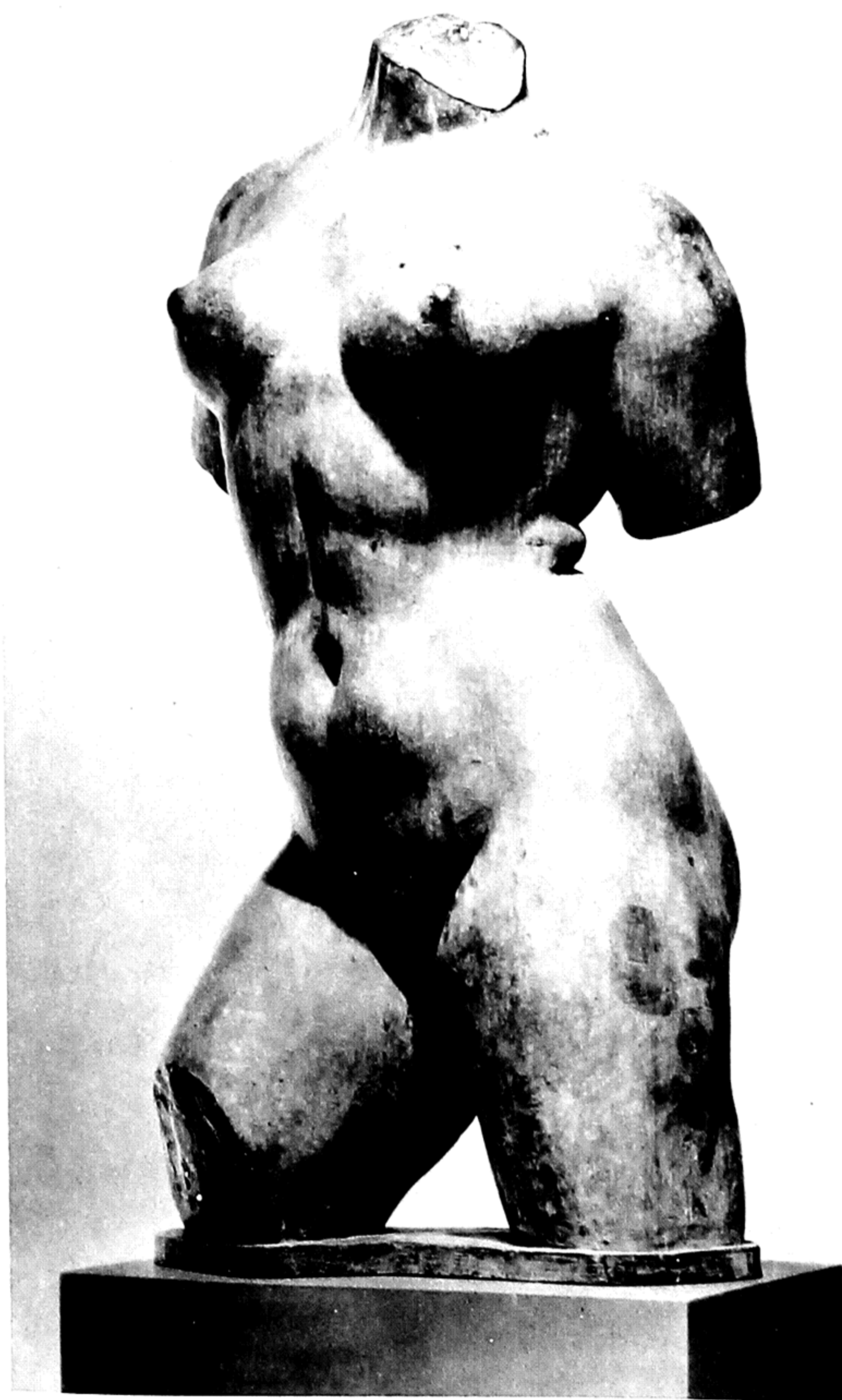


PLATE CVI. Madonna and child, by Jacob Epstein (1880–). New York, collection of Sally Ryan; on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bronze; 1927.

The various styles that followed nineteenth-century Romanticism, each pretending to reject completely its sentimental escapist program, were actually no more than exaggerations of particular aspects. Impressionists were interested in color and light which was simply an extension of Romantic preference for colorful Eastern or historical costumes and settings, although they talked a lot about optics and atmospherics. By stages this sensuous emphasis lead to Abstractionism of various types, rejecting natural appearance entirely to free the artist in his search for "pure form." Other artists, wishing to intensify emotional content, also a Romantic concern, resorted to subjective exaggerations and distortions of natural form sometimes inclusively called "Expressionism."

Jacob Epstein is a sculptor with a powerful sense of mass, which he subjects to exaggerations arising from the Expressionist tendency of twentieth-century art. Resulting peculiarities are carried to the point of affectation, but it is for the bizarre aspects of his work that Epstein is best known. Practically all his large works have raised furores of controversy in England sufficient to inspire occasional attacks of vandalism. It is a great pity, because the public is not only confused in this way about the true values of Epstein's work, but about the meaning of art in general.

In this work Epstein has created figures that exist powerfully as forms, the faces have an arresting expression of somber concern, and the rather attenuated limbs and carefully designed drapery have an energetic directional quality, which creates an exciting sense of movement. Just what personal thought the sculptor wished to convey, however, is obscure; he says that he selected an Indian woman and her child as models because of the religious expression of the "Oriental type." Probably he is only vaguely aware of the nature of the subjective impulses he strives to express, and this explanation is almost meaningless, like the artificiality of some of the gestures. The definitely unpleasant quality of the roughened surfaces, especially in the child, consciously or unconsciously is an affectation to goad and challenge public taste, a shock technique attracting momentary attention at the same time that it blocks the enjoyment and understanding of those who are not well acquainted with art.



PLATE CVII. Night, by Jacob Epstein (1880-). London, Metropolitan Railway Building, exterior. Stone; 1929.

In architectural sculpture Epstein tends toward the conscious aesthetics of the "pure form" section of twentieth-century expression, possibly under the influence of some of the half-baked rationalization that has run riot since the beginning of "modern art," nowhere more inept than in tortuous attempts to develop a "correct" formula for monumental painting and sculpture in an architectural setting.

The chunky, flattened masses of this group, typical of Epstein's architectural sculpture, seem to follow an arbitrary theory of adaptation to the forms of a large building. A massive quality is contributed by the somewhat mechanical simplification, less sensitive than that of Egyptian sculpture, probably meant to suggest the weight of the large rectangular blocks in the wall and the design of the building in masses. Emphasis on horizontal directions in the group corresponds to the essentially horizontal character of the component elements of a modern building, internally a series of floors, structurally for the most part a post-and-lintel steel frame, and externally horizontal courses of stone and of window openings. The flattening of surfaces suggests the simple, smooth faces of the shell of a modern building.

The question arises whether or not this attempt to achieve harmony between structure and decoration has not self-consciously been carried too far. To be sure design must in some way be related to structure, but some of the brilliant fancies of the Rococo period are impressively elegant and indicate that a wide latitude is permissible, while slavish subordination can be stupid and dull. Epstein has clearly felt the need of relieving the powerful rigidity of his group with the restrained movement of the simplified folds of drapery, the sag in the horizontal of the reclining figure and the folds beneath it, the unifying diagonal of the forearm, and general flowing continuity of the design. A similar freedom and sensitivity in respect to proportion and quality of form might have enriched this work, which is far superior to the companion group, *Day*.



PLATE CVIII. Joseph Conrad (1857–1924), by Jacob Epstein (1880–).
London, collection of Muirhead Bone. Bronze; 1924.

More subtle, less arbitrary than in his architectural works, the distortions that Epstein uses in portraiture seem to have the definite purpose of expressing particular aspects of the subject's character. Interpretation of the special qualities that are intended in a given instance will be to some degree subjective, like attempting to visualize program music. Indeed there is not necessarily a conscious purpose in the mind of the sculptor for every distortion he employs. This head of Joseph Conrad again shows the extreme roughness of surface found in so many of Epstein's bronzes, with its unpleasant sense of slightly offending the beholder to see if he can take it, a gentle, haughty snubbing to keep the ordinary run of mortals at a distance, like the smooth, stiff elegance of most art galleries. In this instance there may be an additional intent to suggest the ruggedness of a man who had sailed the seven seas for fifteen years in early life; on a more subjective plane it may convey the musty, tweedy, wool, and tobacco effect of a man's heavy clothing. The broad curve of the lips and the prominent arched eyebrows must have been actual facial characteristics, but they have been given inescapable emphasis possibly to indicate Conrad's Polish parentage. About the heavy eyes and face in general there is an expression of the sober penetration and perhaps retrospect of a novelist who had toiled in far corners of the earth, lived his life in three languages, and created his life work in the third. Epstein's unmistakable sculptural force appears in the solid roundness of the forehead and the sturdy, expressive pose of the aging head on the slightly stooped, vigorously modeled shoulders, suggesting a gaze of calm, forthright tenacity.



PLATE CIX. Paul Robeson (1898–), by Jacob Epstein (1880–).
New York, collection of Carl van Vechten. Bronze; 1928.

Varsity athlete in five sports and all-American end for two successive years, Paul Robeson also made the highest scholastic average in the history of Rutgers University. He took the law course at Columbia but has since distinguished himself as one of America's leading actors and singers. After his rise to affluence and fame Robeson lived for some time abroad, studying music, developing an international reputation as an artist, and seeking refuge from the extreme discrimination practiced against his race in his native land.

Although Epstein says that this head, made during his visit to New York in 1927–1928, is merely a sketch, left unfinished for lack of time before his return to England, it may well be that its simplicity and almost complete lack of the sculptor's usual stylistic affectation are his tribute to the balanced, genuine, physical, and cultural power that inescapably radiates from Robeson's giant person. Epstein himself, born of Russian-Polish parents in New York City where he spent his childhood and youth, may have known enough of the stupid effrontery of racial discrimination to have felt a particular sympathy and elation in Robeson's triumph through art.



PLATE CX. (a) Male torso. Polished brass; 1922. Owner unknown. (b) Portrait of Mlle Pogany. Marble; 1919. Owner unknown. By Constantin Brancusi (1876–).

Pursuit of the aesthetic is one facet of Romanticism that has been made a complete program in the twentieth century, resulting in abstraction of form. There are many varieties of abstraction in sculpture, as there are in painting, mostly more complex than that of Brancusi, but he was one of the leaders and has produced some of the most sensitive and intelligent sculpture in terms of pure aesthetic interest. He clearly seeks three qualities: extreme simplification of form, emphasis of materials, and, in his more complicated works, a firm emphatic rhythm. In the words of Paul Morand, French critic who wrote an introduction to the catalogue of Brancusi's exhibition at the Brummer Galleries, New York, in 1926, his work is " . . . at the extreme pole of purity. The satisfaction we experience before his art is of a quality already so immaterial that though we owe it to the senses, it is to the spirit that we offer thanks."

This is sober and thoughtful writing compared with some of the extravagant nonsense written about Brancusi and about abstraction generally, but the writer simply takes for granted that "purity" and "immaterial quality" are positive values for everyone. He is even a bit apologetic that the sculptor is obliged to express himself in material substance, and insists on his appeal to the "spirit." In order to understand art by way of such criticism, we must first understand the criticism. From the language of Puritanism it derives a high-sounding implication of supreme idealism, and with self-centered carelessness states as universal the particular taste of those who glorify the cultivation of art in an ivory tower.

There is a clear elementary suggestion of masculinity in the *Male Torso*, and an equally simplified feeling of delicate feminine grace in the *Portrait*, which imply a creative process of long, sensitive contemplation inevitably involving some subconscious suggestion. In each, the surface has been carefully worked to bring out striking qualities of the materials used, with a smooth finish to eliminate the evidence of manual labor and convey the single note and gesture of "perfection."

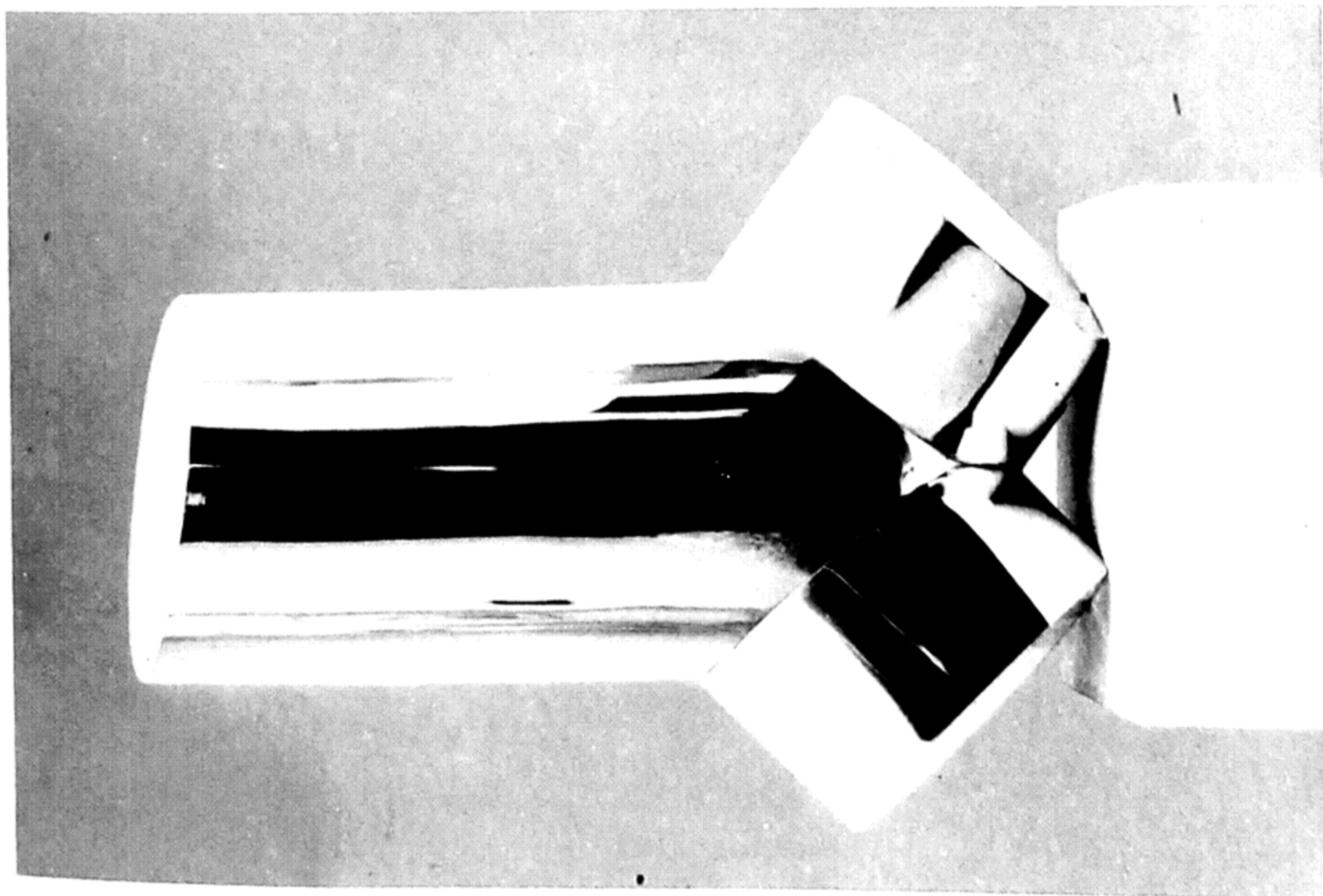
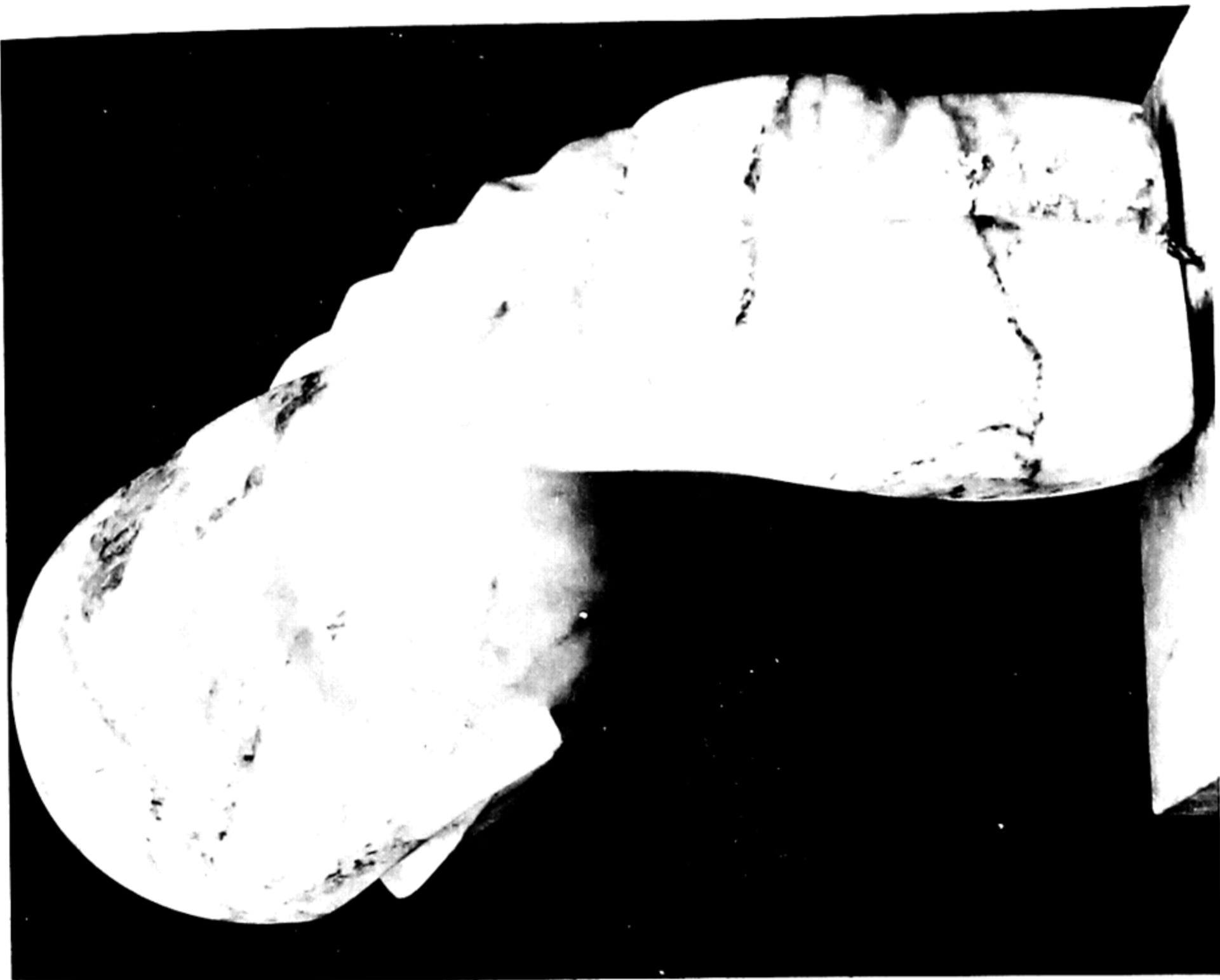
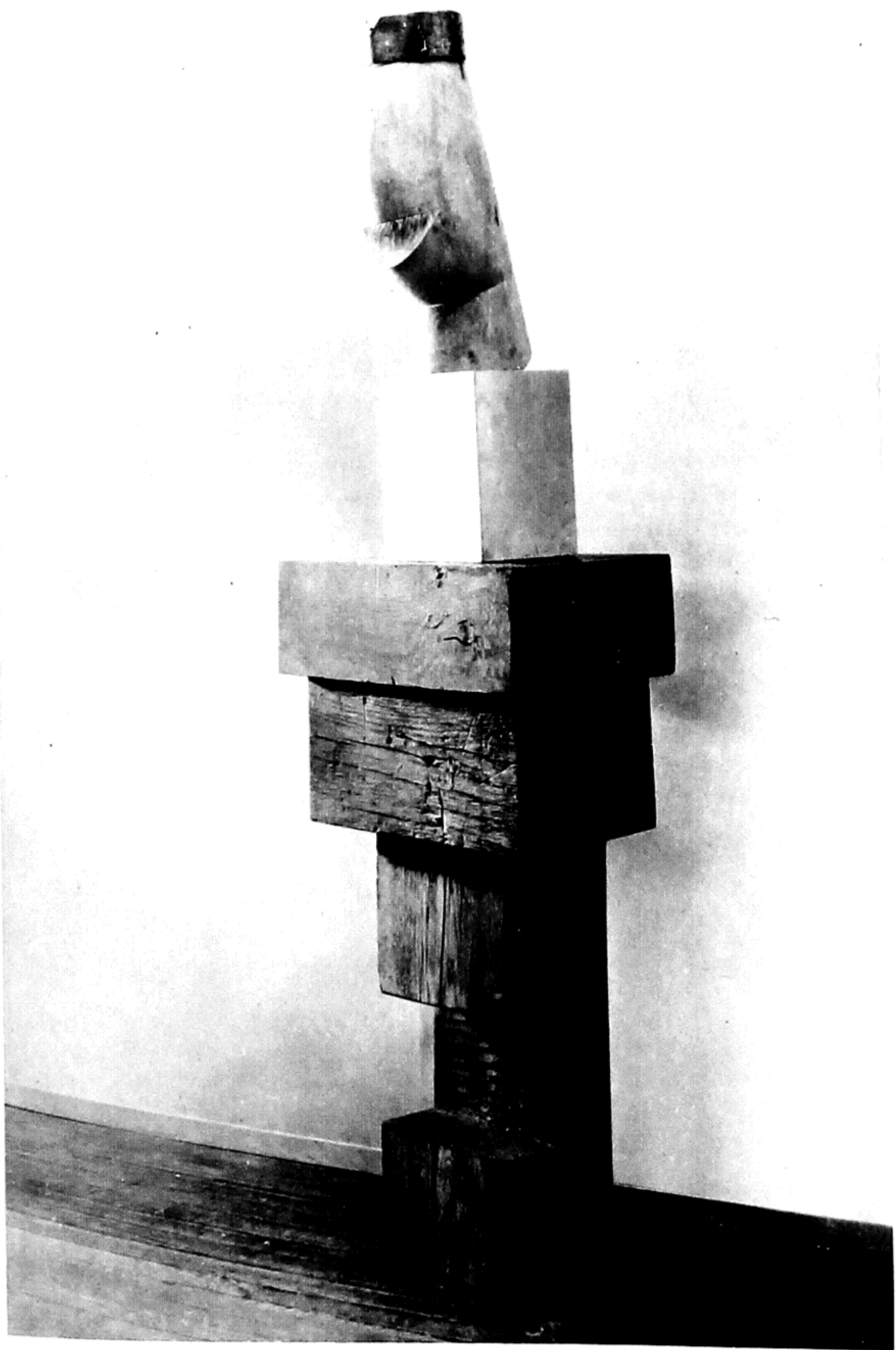


PLATE CXI. The chief, by Constantin Brancusi (1876–). New York, private collection. Walnut; 1925.

Not without a considerable element of humor, this figure reflects perhaps a bit distantly the interest of European Abstractionists in African Negro sculpture, which had developed a geometrical idiom of expressing natural forms far beyond the ingenuity and vitality of anything of the sort invented in Paris. Even the contrast of materials in the head is a device used in African art, although the applied metal parts would there be more carefully designed and finished than in this case. Incidentally, in the Brummer Gallery catalogue the illustration of *The Chief* shows merely the upper or “head” portion. The series of blocks below resembles objects in that exhibition called simply “stands” or “supports.”

Another aspect of Brancusi's interest in material appears in the small, roughly gouged inner surface of the “mouth” to bring out the hard, smooth finish of the other surfaces. Brancusi was greatly concerned with the selection of a piece of material that was sensuously interesting to begin with, and then carefully developed its surface qualities. “Let us visit his studio. Studio?” exclaims Paul Morand, “This stone quarry?” The place is filled with “great blocks of building stone, beams, trunks of trees, boulders, and rocks, and here and there the highlight of a polished bronze.”

Brancusi, long a resident of Paris, is Rumanian by birth, and Morand says without further explanation that he is of “old peasant stock.” Very possibly in his youth the simple, rugged materials of the farm, unadorned gate posts, the sturdy rafters of a barn, boulders in the cow pasture, sang a sensuous poetry that he saw ever afterward in his mind's eye and recreated for the connoisseurs of Paris, surfeited with nineteenth-century elegance and elaboration. At any rate, that is something of what can be read in his sculpture.



AFRICAN NEGRO

MAGIC GEOMETRY

IGNORED or despised for years by traders, missionaries, and the colonial bureaucracy, African Negro sculpture was finally “discovered” by the artists and connoisseurs of Paris and has virtually been accorded a place in European culture for two related reasons. Its creators developed, over what must have been generations of serious and intense concentration, an unfailing sense of the essential aesthetic quality of natural form and an almost unlimited ingenuity in adapting it to the purposes of design. On the one hand this provides for the student and careful observer an object lesson in the sensitive and imaginative analysis of form for purposes of creative expression generally. On the other, it presented to the early twentieth-century artist in the rarefied cultural atmosphere of Paris, a ready-made idiom of “pure form” with which to carry further the a-practical aestheticism of the nineteenth-century Romantics into the realm of Cubism and other forms of abstraction. For this taste, African Negro art has the additional advantages of novelty in its strange and remote origin, especially since it is so different from conventional European expression as to be “difficult” to understand; as a developed artistic expression, it is eligible for the interest of the “ivory tower.” If art is a reflection of life, how then is it possible for this sculpture to serve both a primitive or materially undeveloped level of culture and a sophisticated stage that enjoys great material luxury? Because this distortion of normal appearance expresses an antagonism to the world of natural reality felt under both conditions for very different reasons.

Most art patrons, in the security of civilization, ignore and some despise the vast day-to-day effort required from mankind as a whole in the struggle with nature for sustenance and protection of all including themselves, because in the highly organized system of social production they have been insulated from the more strenuous phases. A people face to face with the natural elements in immediate and constant contact, which none can avoid, react in cultural expression to two aspects of the all-embracing presence. One is the intermittent but occasionally fierce antagonism to mankind, the other is the appearance of unruly complexity. The inclusive scientific

pattern of cause and effect, which now familiarly indicates the underlying order in nature, was apparent to the African tribesman only in the slightest degree. What he could divine seemed to him rather an accomplishment or quality of his own mind than of the objective situation. In a sense this was true, because the amount and character of the pattern he saw depended on the degree of his own penetration, and his own personal formulation of incomplete and often irrelevant observations.

Geometrical shapes and regular or rhythmic patterns symbolize the rational pattern of human thought as opposed to the complex irregularity of nature. Precise geometrical shapes, especially the right angle, are almost nonexistent in plant, animal, or geographical forms, and therefore they become symptomatic of mankind's presence in a natural environment. Primitive man expresses his desire to establish greater control of the baffling complexity and often inimical caprice of his natural surroundings by converting their appearance in this manner, decorating objects of use with geometrically repetitious design, or creating sculptural forms in geometrically simplified style. These devices symbolize the subjection to mankind of the elements they represent. As a matter of fact, much of African Negro art has a religio-magic function, which coincides precisely with this expression.

Primitive magic attempts to control natural environment by intense wishful enactment of a simple imaginary process suggested by the end in view, such as curing illness by scaring away the evil spirit that causes it, or ensuring the presence of game for the hunt by ceremonial imitation. In this sort of magical endeavor, which is more an intense and dramatic statement of aims than a serious device for achieving them, the function of geometrical abstraction in art has a clear place. It is quite a different sort of magic from alchemy and sleight of hand, which are called magic in Western civilization today, and much more like witchcraft or hex charms and also the modern technique of achieving a given end by intensifying the social will through psychological propaganda.

The transformation of human and animal forms into a pattern of geometrical abstraction, therefore, became a matter of prime importance in the culture of the African Negro, and he developed it to an extremely high degree of ingeniousness and aesthetic sensitivity. To him it was a positive, passionate, fateful expression, the effort of human personality wrestling with problems of life and death, answering terror with pure and elemental human courage.

There are no such seriousness and vitality in the taste for aesthetic abstraction among the patrons of modern art. The brilliant formulations of African sculpture were adopted by the artists of Paris and of the Western world because they, too, nourished a sense of antagonism to the objective, natural world, but for a quite opposite reason. The African, from fear and the necessity of incessant struggle due to lack of reliable

controls, actually expresses deep, almost hypnotic, concern with nature in the pictured subjection which his geometrical rendering intends. In Western civilization adequate techniques and knowledge have largely dispelled the fear of nature. Consequently those directly concerned with the world of reality can enjoy familiar scenes as expressive of their control and past or intended accomplishments. Then abstraction becomes the expression of a supercilious contempt for the forces of nature and of material production, as it strives to "get away" from natural appearance to the fanciful inventions of precious and superior individuals.

The region of the broadly homogeneous culture that produced African Negro sculpture lies in the western portion of the continent, below the Sahara and above the British Union of South Africa, containing true Negro peoples and the Negroid race of the Bantu. These folk never developed the practice of recording history, but their culture is evidently quite ancient. There is no general agreement as to its historical extent, some scholars tracing connections even with Egyptian dynastic and pre-dynastic culture. The social structure is a series of small tribal groups with some obscure political relationships, at present of limited extent. Large kingdoms and empires have existed in the past, based apparently, as in European feudalism, on the energy and genius of individual rulers, but little is known about them except for sketchy legends descended by word of mouth, or in sparse records at the few points of contact with history-writing cultures such as the Arabic.

African Negro culture was strongly affected by the resources for human support in the three types of country found in West Africa. Life is difficult and settled life impossible in the dense equatorial forests, which support only nomadic tribes of pygmies, constantly moving about in search of game and wild vegetables. Their culture is very simple and produces practically no art. In the less dense forest fringe small settlements or villages can be built in clearings. Their chief support is derived from hunting, but in the degree that life is settled and protected, they develop some crop cultivation and an art-producing culture. Surrounding the forests is a vast, grassy park land that supports seminomadic tribes, leading a settled pastoral life, subject however to occasional migrations in search of new pasture for their flocks, to escape the dread tsetse fly, and to satisfy their natural craving for salt.

Ancestor worship, which is one aspect of African religion, occurred in large communities where the king and perhaps other leading individuals would appear so tremendously important and powerful that a belief in their supernatural survival might easily be inspired. This was characteristic of the park land, for the size of the forest communities was limited, and they tended toward an animistic religion, which revered spirits attached to various natural objects and phenomena. The greatest culture, something of a combination of both these elements, arose in settled communities

large enough for some form of ancestor worship, where hunting as well as pastoral and agricultural pursuits were engaged in. The greatest concentrations of power occurred in the large kingdoms comprising many tribes and communities, which could exist only in the park land where communication throughout a wide area was possible.

In the consideration of individual pieces of African Negro sculpture, the main effort will be to describe the particular pattern of geometrical abstraction that each presents. Except in respect to the broad outlines indicated above, there is not sufficiently detailed knowledge of African history or cultural beliefs to relate each figure to particular circumstances of its creation. Though it is customary to classify works according to the communities in which they are found, considerable overlapping of characteristics makes stylistic analysis in terms of local schools a complex and hypothetical subject, of little service to the general public and thus beyond the present purpose.

N. B. Most of the factual material on which this section is based has been found in the published outline for Professor Robert Goldwater's course in Primitive Art given by New York University, and in James Johnson Sweeney's introduction to the catalogue of the large exhibition of African Negro sculpture held several years ago at the Museum of Modern Art.

PLATE CXII. Ancestral fetish, from Gabon, OgoWe River, BaKota. New York, collection of Helena Rubinstein. Copper over wood, 22½ inches high.

Placed above a box or basket of bones, these objects were used in the expression of ancestral reverence, like the portrait gallery of an old English manor. There seems to have been no intention of suggesting a particular person in a fetish of this type, however, for they were sold and exchanged freely. Perhaps the striplike lower portion was intended to suggest the unfleshed skeleton as a wishful reassurance that this alarming stage of bodily existence has been recognized and was therefore presumably under human control. The human reference otherwise is readily seen by starting with the two staring buttons as eyes in the middle of the vertical oval for a face. Other figures of this type have an unmistakable mouth within the oval making the connection more obvious.

Pushing as far as possible his twofold objective to represent and not to represent, the sculptor has ingeniously selected a single salient characteristic of each part, such as the mere fact of the ridged projection of a nose, and presented it in a form otherwise completely unlike the natural appearance of that feature. In some parts the modification is so great that no close or positive identification can be made, as in practically all of the lower portion. Elements are altered and combined according to a rich decorative vocabulary: contrasts of emphatic horizontals and verticals, of developed and undeveloped surfaces, straight and curved lines, broad and narrow intervals; the repetition of forms; and the serial development of simple decorative motifs.

This abstraction of natural form to an unidentifiable degree provides exactly the sort of "pure" aesthetic formula sought by European artists of the twentieth century to convey their negative, effete revulsion from nature. The particular type of object here shown was a favorite among Abstractionist painters, and almost identical figures can be found in Picasso's Cubist works.

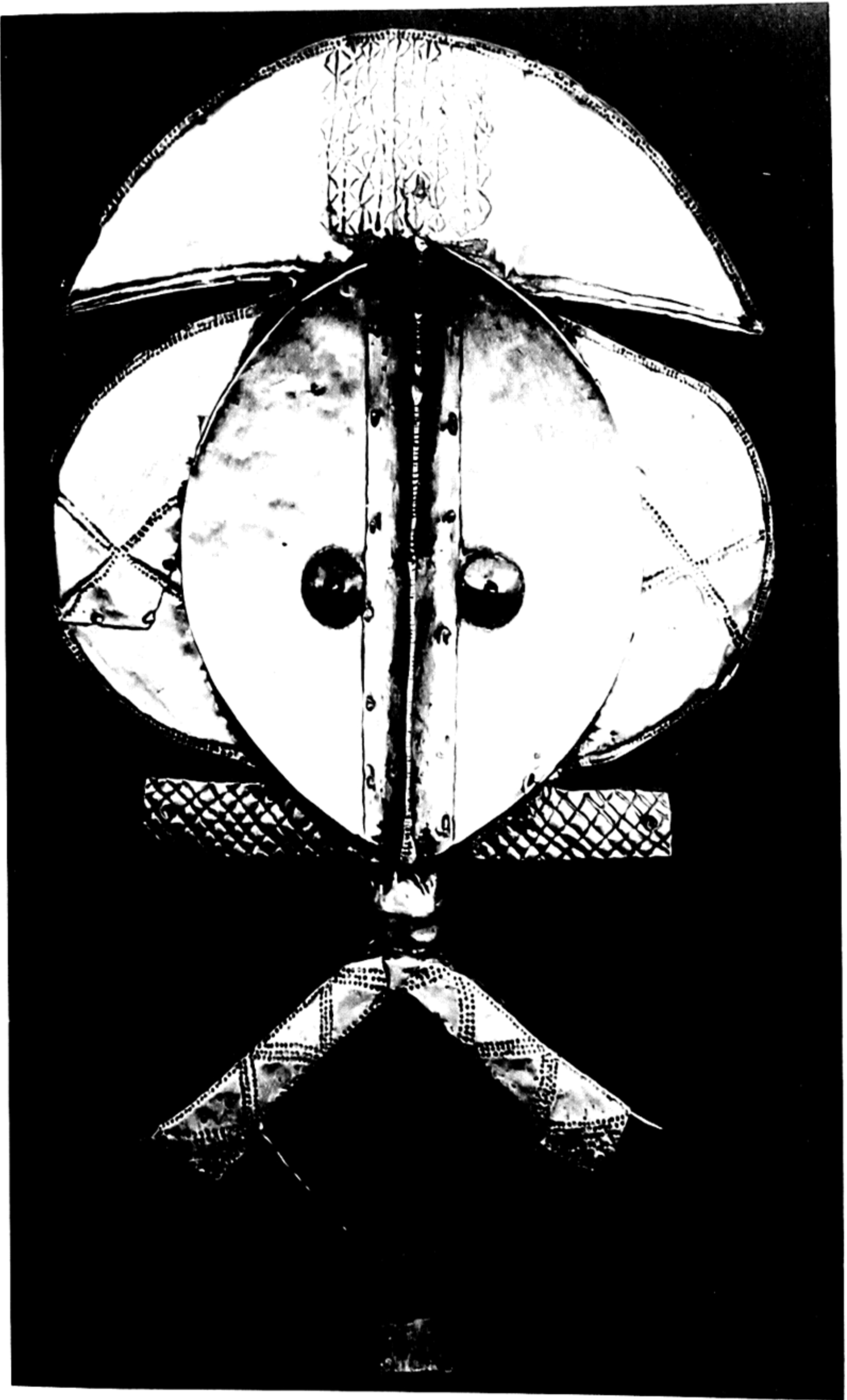


PLATE CXIII. (a) Figure, from the Belgian Congo. Paris, collection of Paul Guillaume. Wood, 32¾ inches high. (b) Commemorative figure, from Cameroon, Duchang, Bangwa. New York, collection of Helena Rubinstein. Wood, 32 inches high.

In reducing parts of the body to geometrical abstractions the African sculptor is particularly sensitive and ingenious in preserving harmony among the forms he employs, like writing a piece of music all in one key. In this female figure every part of the body is given a similarly bulbous or ovoid character, and even the line of the shoulders is harmonized with the characteristically rounded contour. Repetition of a constant formal element also appears in the decorative detail. The necklace, anklets, and armlets, both circular and radiating elements, are made of rather heavy, uniformly thick triangular bands. Even the fingers of the hand are made to conform to this character both in shape and in their similarly cylindrical arrangement.

Less insistently, harmony is also imposed on the parts of the male figure. Each has an approximately cone-shaped character. The almost exact repetition of a diagonal in the chin or beard line, the chest, and the thigh gives a sense of rhythmic coordination. The feet are expanded practically to a circle the full width of the original piece of wood, repeating the circle at the bottom of the base.



PLATE CXIV. (*a*) Ancestral figure of Gabon type, from Southern Cameroon, border of Gabon. New York, collection of Laura Harden. Wood, 23 inches high. (*b*) Figure, from French Sudan. New York, collection of Helena Rubinstein. Wood, 14¾ inches high.

A favorite compositional device of African Negro sculpture is the grouping of arms and legs in distinct arrangements, simplifying the trunk to a mere connecting link. In the male figure the limbs are ingeniously compressed into two separate "sub-assemblies," as it were, connected by the long simple column of the trunk, which is even narrower than the head.

In spite of the grotesque appearance of African sculpture, which was at first improperly attributed by Europeans to a simple inability to approximate nature more closely, occasional details indicate close observation and sensitive suggestion of natural quality. For example here, the arms and shoulders of the male figure have a definitely masculine muscular quality, and the gesture of the hands holding a small cylindrical object is skillfully indicated.

The female figure represents an even more extreme degree of the type of abstraction described above. The trunk is virtually eliminated as the angular sub-assembly of the lower region provides a pointed support for the curved sub-assembly of the upper, in what may well be a conscious or unconscious erotic symbolism. Consistent with the extreme abstraction of the parts of the body, the head is transformed into an elaborate finial, almost as remote from natural appearance as the ancestral fetish (Plate CXII) which it distantly resembles. The decoration of sharp, grooved lines adds to the richness and uniformity of the whole, and their chevron pattern contributes a directional movement which coincides with the erotic suggestion of the forms.

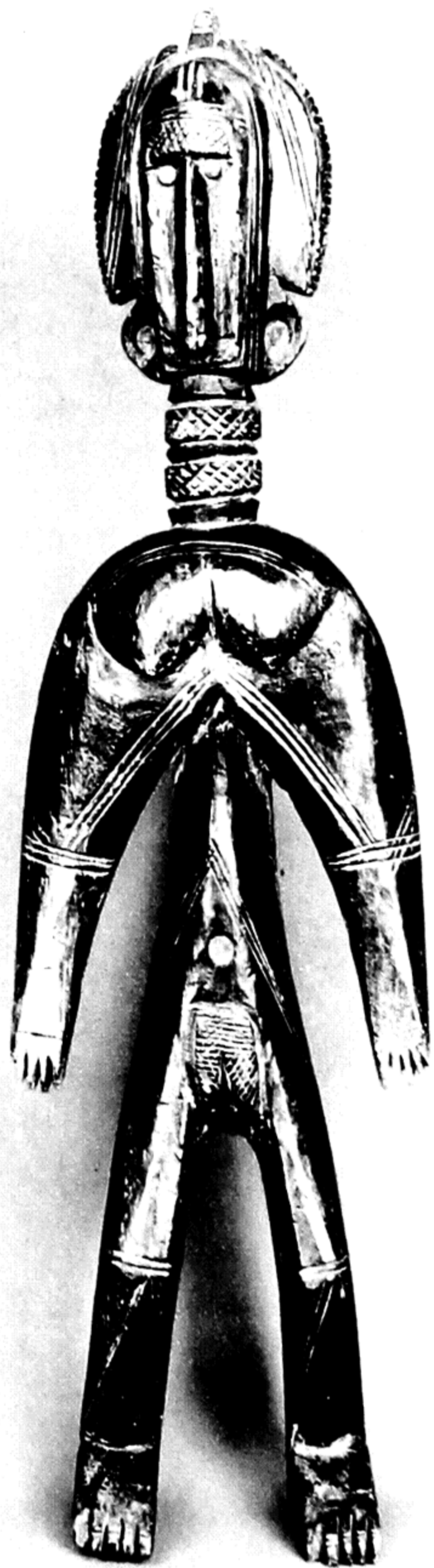


PLATE CXV. (a) Figure, from the Ivory Coast, Senufo. Paris, Collection of Tristan Tzara. Wood, 10¼ inches high. (b) Figure, from Angola, Vatchivokoe. Berlin, Museum für Völkerkunde. Wood, 23¼ inches high.

The brilliant ingenuity of transformation and unfailing sense of design in African Negro sculpture does not represent pure fancy, but rather an intense concentration on the quality of natural form in a truly strenuous effort to order its fate according to the will of man. The resulting aesthetic intensity is what makes the work great art, and constitutes its most important meaning as an indication of the cultural stature of those who produced it. Although generally this concentration on nature produced something intentionally remote from natural appearance, there seem to have been some cases in which verisimilitude was the aim. There are accounts, for example, of figures of important rulers reputed to have borne an actual physical resemblance to persons they were supposed to represent, within the limits of the general conventions of African style.

In contrast to the highly abstract figure on the left, the one carrying two jars clearly has many characteristics showing an attempt to imitate nature closely. Most obviously, the frequent African device of adding details in other materials is here used realistically, a woolly substance suggesting hair being applied to the head and actual earrings and necklace of small shells added. The carving of bodily forms is also quite natural by comparison with the other figure. The fingers and toes, often reduced to mere grooves or nicks, here show joints, nails, and a definite sense of structure, and the face is carefully represented in all features. Furthermore, the raised arm holding the jug over the figure's left shoulder is a comparatively daring attempt to develop a sense of space and natural movement, which are completely omitted, as a rule, from African Negro sculpture, as from Egyptian. The smooth structural continuity in the body also adds a sense of life.

However, basic qualities of form and design identify this figure with other West African work, as in the proportion of the small torso to the short, heavy limbs and large head. The rhythmic protuberance of the chin, elbow, hand, breasts, navel, knees, and feet, which is the very simple spatial composition of both of these figures, except for the gesture of the raised arm, is also a frequent feature of African Negro sculpture.



PLATE CXVI. Group of figures, from British Nigeria, Benin. Berlin, Museum für Völkerkunde. Bronze, base 22 inches by 13 inches.

Although the face of the main figure in this group closely follows a convention that appears in other works from Benin, as in Plate CXVII, the general intention here is obviously realistic, the difference in size of the figures, possibly a king and two retainers, being a convention common to the art of many ages and lands for indicating difference in rank or importance. The greater naturalism, in terms of the meaning that has here been suggested for African abstraction, would indicate a greater sense of security in relation to the forces of nature, and it is true that Great Benin was one of the large African kingdoms of the past, its wealth and development having inspired glowing accounts by various European travelers. In 1472 Portuguese navigators on the then general quest down the west coast of Africa for a new route to India, visited the capital of Benin by which they were greatly impressed, bringing back an ambassador to the royal court and setting up a considerable trade, which lasted about a century.

Seconding an enthusiastic account of the capital about the year 1600 by the Dutch brothers deBry, Dr. Olpert Dapper in 1668 wrote of its thirty broad streets lined with carefully constructed houses, each running the length of the city. The houses were low but large, containing long galleries and many rooms, with walls of reddened clay polished like marble. A solid rampart ten feet high surrounded the town and also the royal palace which "was as large as the whole city of Harlem." The various buildings of the palace enclosure were connected by long colonnades of wooden pillars covered from top to bottom with bronze plaques depicting battle scenes.

In 1704 Nyendal found the city in ruins with only rough wooden columns in the palace. Destroyed and reconstructed several times in civil struggle, which seems to have begun in the latter part of the seventeenth century, the capital city of Benin never regained its original glory and was finally sacked by the British in 1897 after a consular party had been killed in an effort to interfere with religious festivals involving the practice of human sacrifice. At that time the bronze plaques of Dapper's account were found in storage but little artistic importance was attached to them and only a few were withheld from the melting pot as curiosities.



PLATE CXVII. Head, from British Nigeria, Benin. Paris, Musée Ethnographique. Bronze.

The difficult *cire-perdue* (see Plate LXVI) method of bronze casting, which the Benin sculptors skillfully employed, is sometimes said to have been imported from Portugal during the period of their friendly and profitable relations. However, some evidence exists to the effect that the process may have been of more ancient use. The early contact of Benin with Portugal, however, seems to have been the only one between European and African Negro civilization in which the latter profited, or indeed managed even to survive. The appearance of figures that may be unmistakably identified as Portuguese traders in the comparatively realistic Benin reliefs shows that even artistic creation remained alive during the period of contact.

None of their characteristic art, however, is created any longer by African Negro tribes. Extant originals probably antedate the period of European imperial conquest in the nineteenth century, and possibly even the hideous depredations of the eighteenth-century slave trade. With little or no data so far discovered by which to judge their age, the known works of African Negro art are generally presumed, because of their preservation, to have originated within the past four or five centuries, probably following closely the forms of a much older tradition.

Usual simplification of form appears in this head. Although in the spirit of naturalism characteristic of Benin's art, it is more human in appearance and clearly shows details of the elaborate personal adornment that was fashionable there. The cylindrical shape given this head by the high necklace was also used for the design of jugs, and many other functional objects were made with an impeccable sense of design and decoration by African Negro sculptors—seats, head rests, drums, vessels, weights, weapons, and parts of clothing. Even the sculpture without a practical function seems almost invariably to have had a specific religious use in ceremonies which attended every step of life—among them initiation, puberty, war, the hunt, burial—and it may be that no clear dividing line occurred in African Negro culture distinguishing fine and applied art as it does in modern industrial society. They beautified all their objects of use and clearly understood the use for all their objects of beauty.



PLATE CXVIII. Seat, from the Belgian Congo, MaNyema. Leipzig, Museum für Völkerkunde. Wood, 18½ inches high.

Possibly the throne of a tribal chief, the supporting figure of this seat seems to indicate the gesture of obeisance expected of the approaching subject. Such a practical association would explain why the figure is so comparatively naturalistic, with its facial expression the very essence of benign submission and the spread hands a quite convincing salaam. In spite of simplification, the hollowness of the palm, radiating action of the fingers, and position of the thumb are suggested in a convincing manner far beyond the undeveloped skill either of completely primitive or archaic artists.

From the side, the design of this figure shows the series of sharply salient features often apparent in African Negro sculpture, the inclined head's pointed chin, the conical breasts, the protruding belly, and the knees, at close and even enough intervals to be called rhythmic. Extending to the side, the elbows echo this movement in a manner not apparent in this head-on view, and the prominent gesture of the thumb parallels the position of the upper arm.



PLATE CXIX. (a) Mask, from the Belgian Congo, BaSonge, Benum Mpsaa. London, collection of Sidney Burney. Wood, colored; $24\frac{3}{4}$ inches high. (b) Mask, from Cameroon, Bamendjo. Zandvoort, collection of Baron Edward von der Heyde. Wood, $26\frac{3}{8}$ inches high.

Masks of many varieties and all conceivable materials were used by the chief participants in practically all African Negro ceremonies. For the more important events involving the welfare of the entire community, large elaborate masks, which were used many times either seasonally or as the particular occasion arose, were finely carved in permanent materials. For personal ceremonies like initiations, circumcision, or coming of age, the celebrant would wear a mask of cloth, basketry, soft wood, or other simply worked substance later discarded.

Both of these masks show that the brilliant decorative vocabulary of the African Negro sculptor included an exciting sense of texture, achieved in the one on the right by the flat fields of fine, graceful reeding in contrast with the smoothly rounded forms between, and in the other by the richly painted stripes, which develop almost the entire surface. Harmony of form is likewise maintained in each, curves and prominent ovoid or shell-like forms distinguishing the design of the right-hand mask, while the features of the striped mask are a series of partly rectangular blocks. From the side, parts of these masks are seen to protrude sharply forward, the "mouth" portion of the round-formed mask projecting almost as far as the "head-dress" rises; the narrow painted mask having an over-all side elevation about as broad as it is tall.

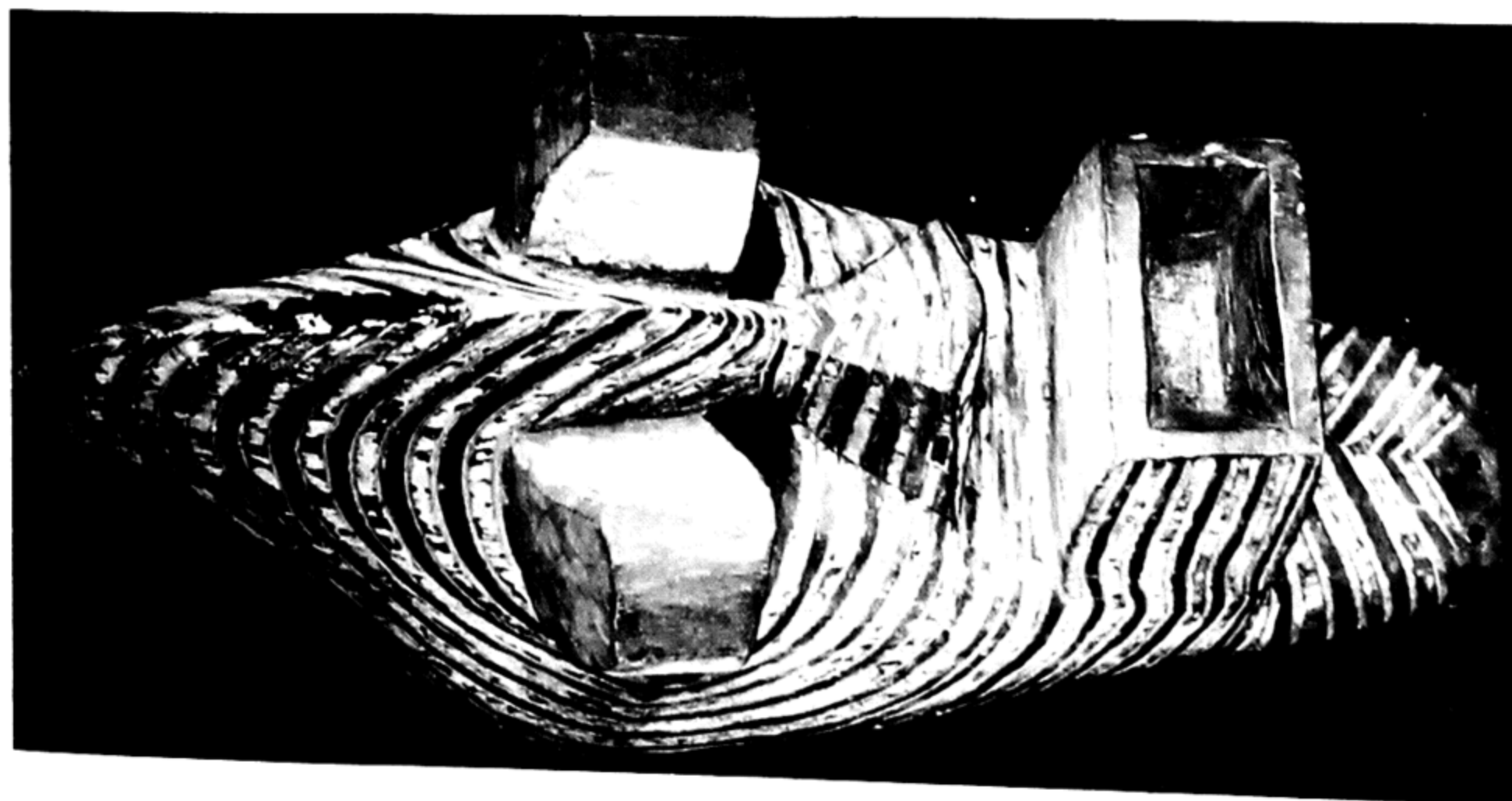
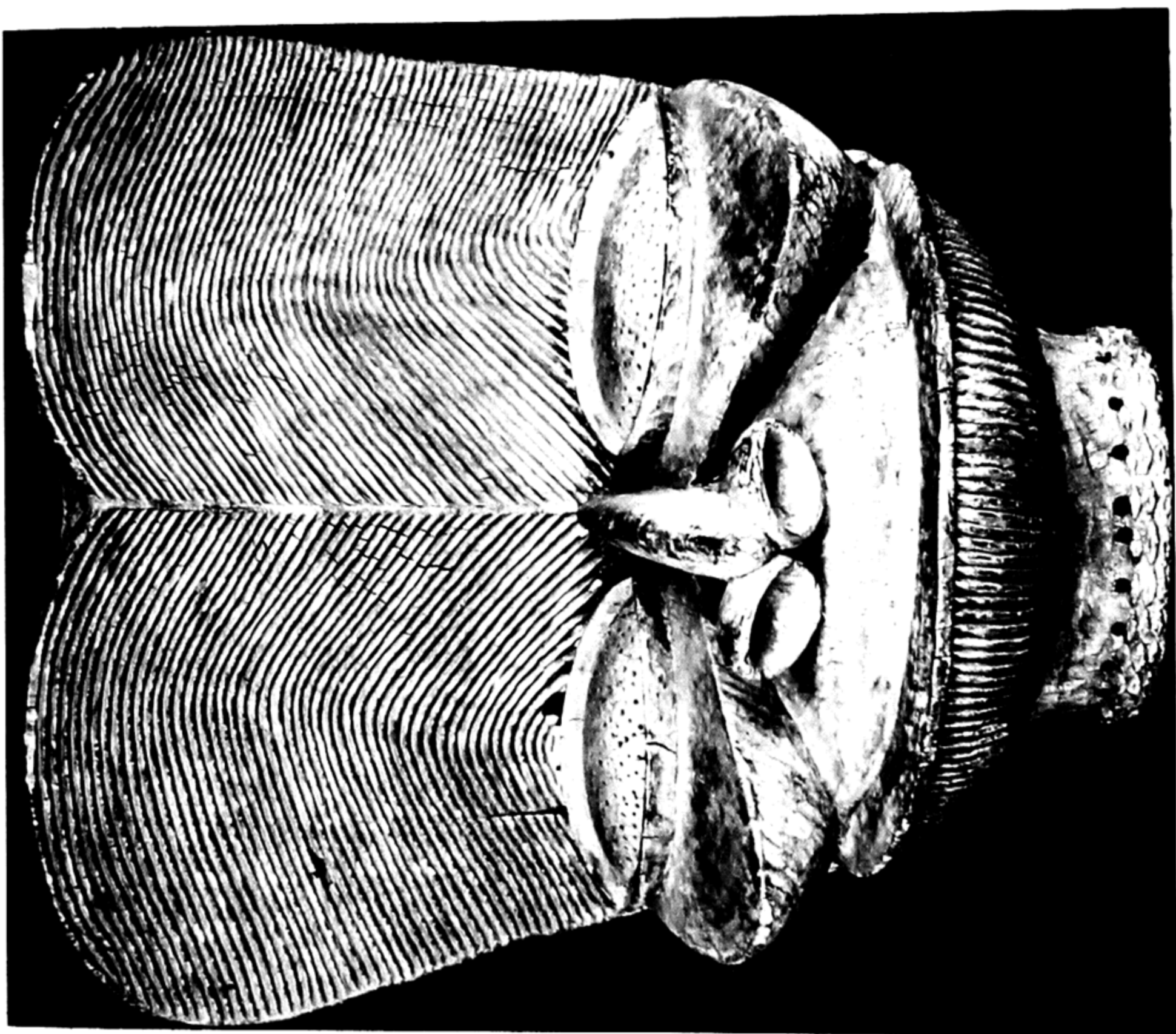


PLATE CXX. (a) Mask surmounted by figure, from the French Sudan. Philadelphia, collection of Earl Horter. Wood, 25 inches high. (b) Mask, from the French Congo, Pangwe (Pahouin). Berlin, Museum für Völkerkunde. Wood, whitened; 29½ inches high. (c) Mask surmounted by bird, from the Ivory Coast, Baule. Paris, collection of Paul Guillaume. Wood with metal plates, 15¾ inches high.

The unfailing invention and impeccable sense of design of the African Negro sculptor produces endless variety within what seem to be strict technical and conventional limitations. Verticality is the keynote in the mask on the left which symbolizes a good spirit, made for the N'Tomo, a society of boys. The proportions of the face are somewhat similar to the middle one, of which the formal essence is an expression of tension in extreme proportional ratios. Delicately elongated, the shape of the face is approximately reversed in the nose even more exaggerated in length. Placing the narrow, sharp line of the mouth so far down in the space between nose and chin again gives a tense exaggerated ratio, which is repeated in the proportion of the slightly indicated nostrils to the very long nose, and the crowding of the very small eyes to the inside of the eye sockets. The relation between the sharp lines of the eyebrows and the two tiny curves in the center of the forehead repeat the whole character of the design in their contrasting size and cramping toward the center line. The sharpness and linear delicacy of the markings suggest perhaps accidentally the style of the modern Swiss painter Paul Klee, and the elongated forms that of the painter-sculptor Modigliani, whose work is clearly related to African sculpture.

Ingenious abstraction of natural form is shown in the barely recognizable bird drinking out of a tall vessel surmounting the mask on the left, sometimes more realistically indicated in other masks of this type. It is reminiscent of Aesop's ancient fable of the stork who could eat very little of a banquet served on flat plates by the wily fox, She retaliated by inviting him to dine, setting the food out in tall vases so he could get none at all. No significance can be attached to the parallel, nor to the endless stylistic parallels in the art of many other peoples remote in time and place, at least until more light has been thrown on the still obscure history of African culture.

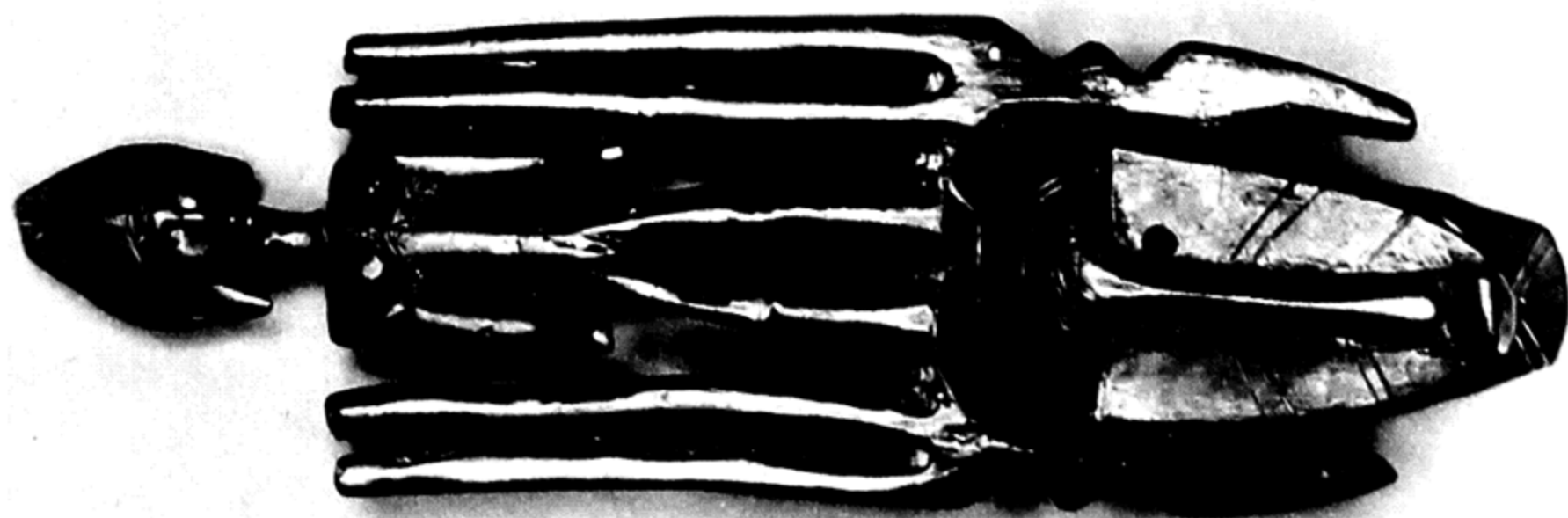
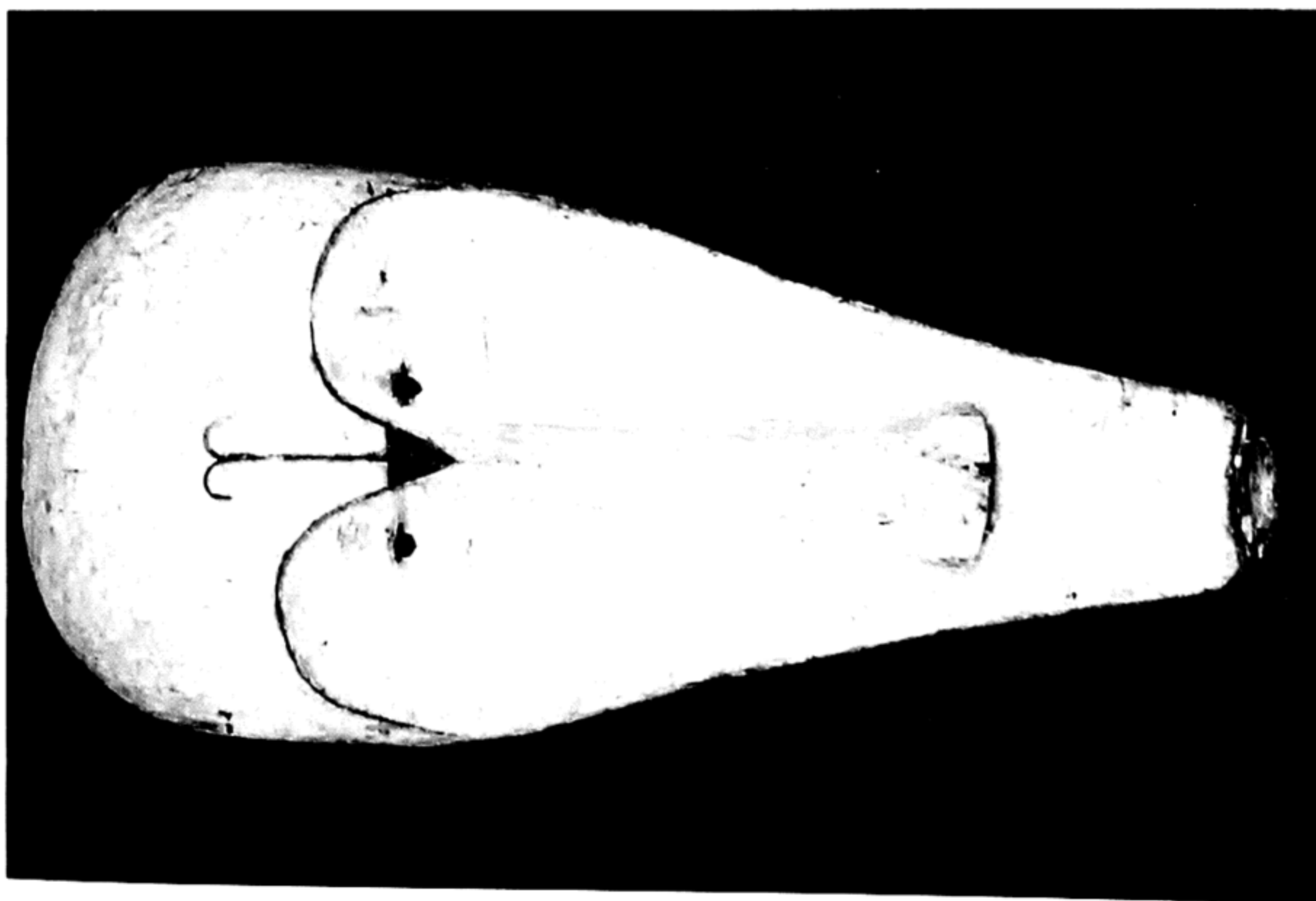
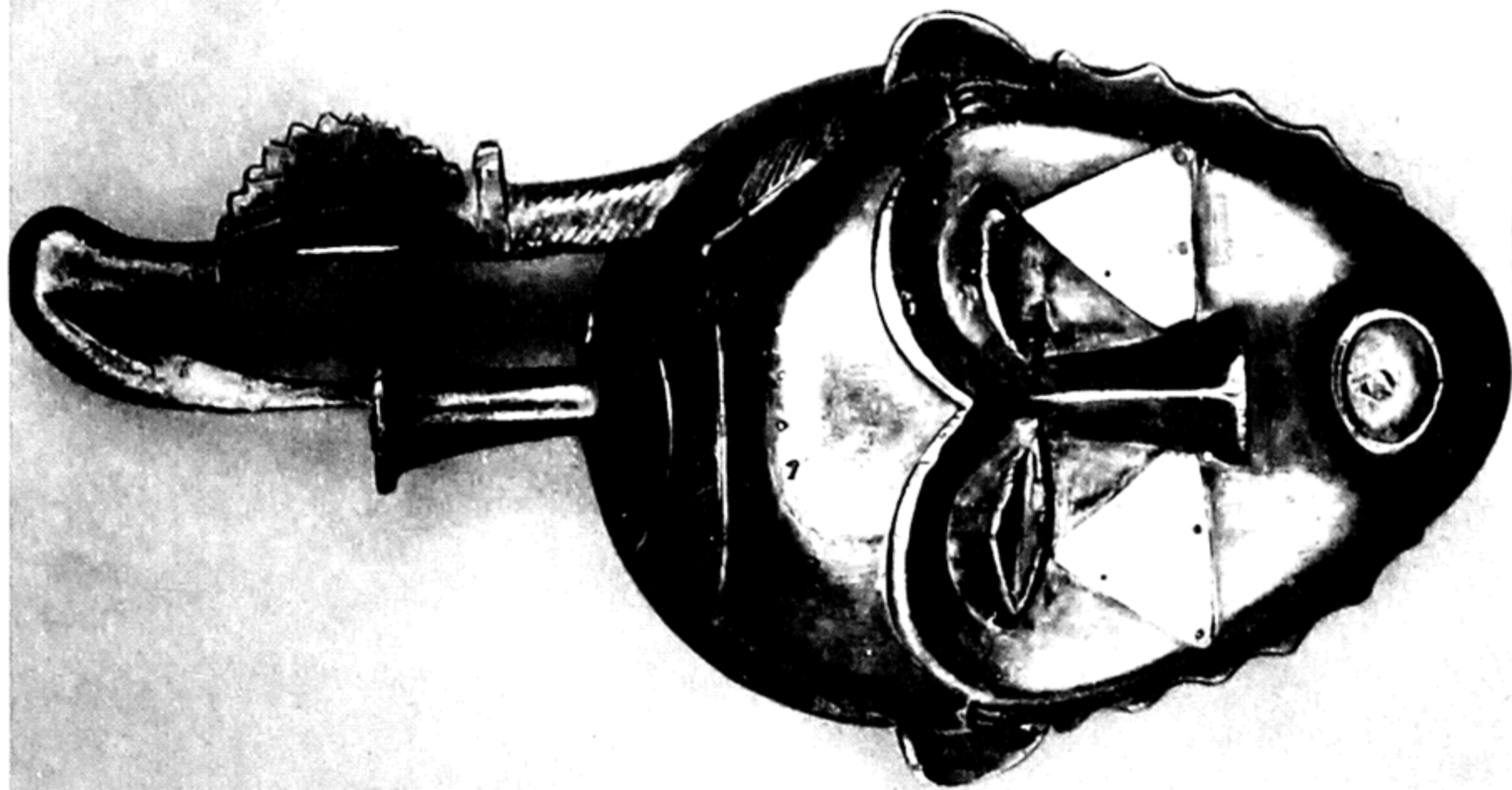


PLATE CXXI. (a) Mask, from the Ivory Coast. Paris, collection of Louis Carré. Wood, 18½ inches high. (b) Mask in the form of an antelope, from the Ivory Coast, Baule, Aitutu. Paris, collection of Charles Ratton. Wood, 15¾ inches high. (c) Antelope, from the French Sudan, Upper Niger, Mandé, Suguni. Paris, collection of Louis Carré. Wood, 26 inches long.

Animal masks of this type indicate the tendency to confer magical properties and even deity on animals, trees, living creatures of all sorts, as well as on rocks, streams, and even elements of the weather in African religion. This animistic interpretation of the universe is presumed to have arisen in the smaller communities of the forest fringe where hunting was a principal activity and ancestor worship did not exist, but because of the unrecorded migrations and conquests of the past, all knowledge of which has been lost probably forever, the richer and more prominent cultures of West Africa combine the various religious tendencies. Animal representations do not necessarily refer only to ceremonies of the hunt, the antelope figure having originally been attached to a basketwork cap used in sowing and harvesting festivals. The completely geometrical formulation of the mask on the left suggests the conscious desire of the sculptor to subject the natural head to the purposes of the human event for which the mask was intended, whereas the antelope mask has a decorative elegance so pronounced and skillful that its author could hardly have been innocent of some sophisticated purpose in that direction.



PLATE CXXII. Equestrian figure, from Dahomey, Yomba. Paris, collection of Louis Carré. Wood, colored; 15¾ inches high.

Much more ambitious in content than most African Negro sculpture in the round, this representation of the thunder god Schango is from the fabulous country of Dahomey, part of the French colonial empire and one of the large African kingdoms of which some historical record has existed since the early seventeenth century. Dahomey has been noted for practice of human sacrifice similar to that which caused the suppression of Benin. Many human victims, often prisoners of war, sometimes also volunteers, were ceremonially executed at the annual "customs" to serve the king in the spirit world; and at the grand "customs" after the death of a king, many of his wives and the eunuchs of the palace staff were killed so that they might accompany him on his journey in the hereafter. Such practices existed in several other prehistoric societies far from the African scene.

Another feature of the Dahomeyan civilization that attracted the interest of Europeans was the brave and fierce corps of Amazonian women who formed a large regular section of the royal army and were always given the most honorable and responsible tasks in battle. In contrast to their homicidal religious practices, the Dahomeyans never killed in war except to defend themselves, their object being to take the enemy captive for service and sacrifice. To this end they developed elaborate techniques of surprise, scattering into the bush off regular paths at a distance of several day's journey from the village or encampment to be attacked, lighting no fires, and creeping up in complete silence in an attempt to take their intended victims completely unaware and powerless to resist. Doubtless there are no published accounts of what leading African minds have thought about the humanity of European techniques of warfare, but human sacrifice was one of the things about which Europeans took a high moral position in stamping out native African cultural and political independence, often with bloody massacres.

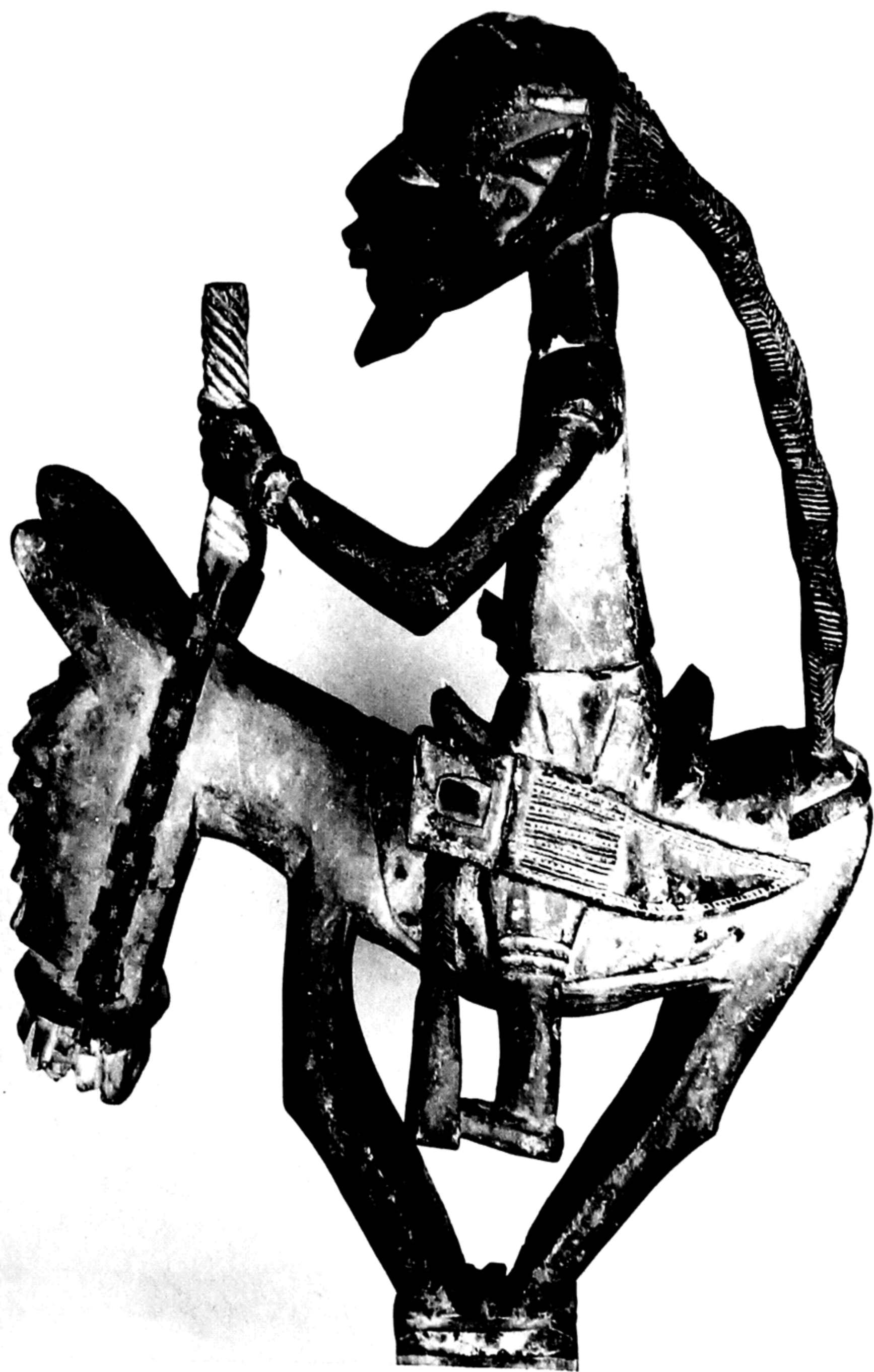


PLATE CXXIII. Door, from the Ivory Coast, Senufo. Washington, D.C., collection of Mrs. Eugene Meyer. Wood, 52½ inches by 34½ inches.

African Negro sculpture in the round is virtually a rigid, frontal assemblage of the various parts of the figure with little sense of developed spatial movement or composition. In this way it is similar to Egyptian art, although no direct cultural continuity has been established, and it would be difficult if not impossible to do so. Similarly, the relief sculpture of the region shows no sense of depth, and objects are represented flatly in the broadest view either from top, front, or side. Here for example, alligators and turtles are represented horizontally as seen from above; birds and other objects are represented in the vertical plane as seen from the side; and the masks are seen from the front. The two masks in the upper right portion of the door are characteristic of those used in the ceremonies of the "Do" religious society. Throughout the entire design a delicacy appears similar to that of the antelope mask (Plate CXX, *b*) from the same region, which is here achieved in part by the grouping of fine lines in simple patterns varying slightly but creating throughout a uniform textural contrast with the flat background.



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